

SOUTH AFRICA  
A SHORT HISTORY

*by*

ARTHUR KEPPEL-JONES

M.A., PH.D.

SENIOR LECTURER IN HISTORY AT THE  
UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND

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## INTRODUCTION

THE history of South Africa, as of other countries, has been greatly influenced by geography. A few important features of South African geography must therefore be borne in mind by the reader.

The concentric lines of mountain ranges, roughly parallel to the southern and eastern coast, for long hindered access to the interior; and when these obstacles were overcome by the pioneer pastoralists, they in turn were cut off from the outside world. The main watershed of the Drakensberg runs up the eastern side of the country. The long rivers flowing westward from this to the Atlantic, the Orange and its tributaries, are shallow and sometimes reduced to little more than a succession of pools; the shorter streams running east are greater in volume, but broken by falls. All have sandbanks at their mouths. Thus no navigable river gave either entry to the country from the sea or a route to the interior from the coastal plain. The colonists had to move by ox-wagon over difficult country.

As the traveller goes north from the south coast, after crossing each mountain range he debouches on to a plateau higher than the last, till the great plateau of the interior is reached. In the eastern Transvaal a steep escarpment divides High Veld from Low Veld, while from the Witwatersrand (6000 feet above sea level) the drop to the Limpopo valley in the north is more gradual.

The interior plateau, whose altitude varies from 4000 to 6000 feet, is healthy; the winters are cold and the nights cool even in summer. But the pioneer trekking northwards, when he descended to the Low Veld of the eastern or northern Transvaal, encountered malaria and the tsetse fly. For most, therefore, the Transvaal High Veld was the furthest limit of the migration.

The direction of the trekking movement was influenced too by the rainfall. In the eastern part of the country, below the Drakensberg and for a little distance to the west of that great divide, this is from thirty to fifty inches, and similar figures are

recorded in the mountainous country of the south-west coast. But inland from these regions, to the north and west, the precipitation decreases to fifteen, ten, five inches. Migration inland from Cape Town therefore tended to take a north-easterly direction, and was deflected into the drier north only by the resistance of the Bantu on the old Eastern Frontier.

In the neighbourhood of Cape Town and in a narrow belt up the west coast the rain falls almost exclusively in winter; elsewhere only in summer. The winter rainfall area, the earliest settled, was and is the country of wheat, wine and deciduous fruit. A different agriculture is suited to the area of heavy summer rainfall. But South Africa has, on the whole, a poor soil, and is better adapted to pastoral farming than to tillage. The great natural wealth of the country is in minerals—diamonds, gold, coal, iron and other base and precious metals. When these were discovered the political map had already been roughly drawn, and it was found that mineral wealth was distributed in a way likely to disturb the political arrangements. Much of South African history is the result of this circumstance.

North of the Limpopo, the high plateau of Southern Rhodesia (4000 to 5000 feet) is suited to European settlement. But this was not colonised till the end of the nineteenth century, and then was reached either by the old Missionaries' Road through Bechuanaland or from Beira on the east coast. The Transvaal Boers, therefore, unlike the French Canadians, had no Ontario beyond them which could be approached only through their country. But for the discovery of gold their isolation would have been complete.

In relation to the world South Africa was, till recently, more like an island than a continental country. The interior of Africa was barbarous and for a long time little known. All links with the outside world were by sea, and the voyages long. Southampton is some 6000 miles from Cape Town; Bombay and Perth nearly 5000. This remoteness accentuated the isolation of the country; and though its position on the ocean route from Europe to the East subjected Cape Town and the nearer districts to influences from both those parts of the world, the topography of the country prevented those influences from reaching the interior.

The discovery of diamonds and gold gave the first effective impetus to the building of railways, various ports competing with one another for the trade of the mines. The Witwatersrand became the hub of the railway system, and the main lines spokes radiating from it to points on the coast. This development gave the Rand even greater political importance than it would have had on the merits of the mining industry. The building of these railways and the access they gave to various ports and internal markets helped, in turn, to determine the development of the rural areas.



## CHAPTER I

### THE HALF-WAY HOUSE

ON a February day in 1488 a band of Hottentots was pasturing some cattle near the beach at Mossel Bay, on the southern coast of Africa. These Hottentots were a pastoral people who had no knowledge of cultivation. They lived in encampments made of portable huts which could be packed up when the grass was eaten or the water failed, and people, cattle, fat-tailed sheep, dogs and possessions would move to a new habitation. They were a light brown or yellow-skinned people, with little tufts on their heads to serve for hair; they would in the future be described by unfriendly critics as lying, stinking and thieving, speaking a tongue that sounded like the clucking of hens, and their name would be used as a proverbial synonym for a people destitute of civility.

Yet they were the conquerors of the land they lived in, and the bearers of the highest civilisation that it had yet seen. Two centuries earlier, perhaps, their ancestors had arrived on the west coast of tropical Africa, coming from the direction of the Great Lakes. Since then they had trekked steadily southwards, keeping to the coastal regions, and then eastwards when the southern extremity of the continent had been reached. The eastward advance was still continuing.

In that long trek one human enemy had been met and overcome—the pygmy race of Bushmen. The Bushmen, short of stature but otherwise so far resembling the Hottentots in appearance that the white men could not at first distinguish them, were not pastoralists but hunters. Every band of Bushmen had its hunting grounds on which no stranger might trespass. If the Hottentot invaders had the temerity to do so, how could they expect mercy? The poisoned arrow, cunningly shot by an unseen enemy, vindicated the rights of the true owner of the soil. And as for those helpless, slow-moving beasts that accompanied the Hottentots everywhere, bagging them was child's play to the expert hunters of the fleet and timid antelope. The

Hottentots, on the other hand, were better organised and well able to punish these aggressions. The Bushmen themselves were not the oldest inhabitants of the country, but the successors of others known to us only by their bones and implements that have been discovered. Now the Bushmen in turn were dispossessed by the Hottentots.

Some retired to the dry and stony plains of the interior. Others remained in the Hottentot country nearer the coast, but sought the safety of the mountains. There, in the deep afforested kloofs where streams splashed over boulders and pebbles, or in the caves under the steep buttresses flanking the kloofs, the pygmies hid themselves. Like the leopards and baboons that shared their retreat, they sallied forth at night to prey on the flocks and herds of the Hottentots. No quarter was given on either side.

That was the political and economic background of the herdsmen who happened to be at Mossel Bay on the February day in 1488. Gazing thoughtlessly, perhaps, to seaward, they caught a sudden sight of something new, unheard-of, terrifying. Two large objects, the like of which had never been seen, floated on the surface and came to a stop at no great distance from the land. They were Portuguese caravels under the command of Bartolomeu Dias. Their arrival signified that Portuguese seamen had at last, after half a century of almost continuous effort, passed the southernmost point of the continent and reached the Indian Ocean by sea from the Atlantic. Dias had come down the west coast, keeping close to the land until a gale had blown him out of sight of it and far to the southward. Turning east again when the storm subsided, he saw no land, and dared to hope that he had found what so many had sought. The course of the ships was set to the north, they reached the coast again and came to anchor in Mossel Bay.

The Hottentots did not know that this event would lead to the extinction of their race, but they were frightened enough to flee at once into the interior with their cattle. Then, while the strangers filled their water-casks, the Natives plucked up courage to pelt them with stones. The incensed Portuguese commander picked up a crossbow and shot one of the assailants. The sailors then continued on their way up the coast, found

nothing of note and insisted on returning home. Dias gave way to the demand, set up a *padrão* on the promontory of Kwaaihoek to proclaim the authority of the King, and on his way back discovered and named the Cape of Good Hope which he had missed in the storm on the outward journey.

The mutual suspicion and hostility between Hottentots and Portuguese at Mossel Bay were renewed at many later meetings. In 1497 the voyage of Dias was followed by that of Vasco da Gama, who completed the work of his predecessor by reaching India. Da Gama's crew had a skirmish with the Hottentots at St. Helena Bay. More voyages followed. Antonio da Saldanha discovered Table Bay, climbed Table Mountain, and had a fight with some Hottentots before departing. Francisco d'Almeida, the retiring Viceroy of the Indies, put into the same bay on his homeward voyage in 1510. There was a misunderstanding with the Natives, a scuffle, and then a more serious engagement in which the ex-Viceroy and many others of high rank lost their lives. After that the Portuguese tended to steer clear of the dangerous neighbourhood.

This was not because they were afraid. The builders of the Portuguese Empire faced other and stronger enemies bravely. They would not have hesitated to deal with the Hottentots, if there had been anything to gain by doing so. Their lack of interest in the southern corner of the continent was due rather to their possession of other and more useful outposts.

Vasco da Gama had been the first to abandon the coastwise route in the Atlantic and to steer boldly south across the ocean from the Cape Verde Islands. The Portuguese soon established the best sailing routes: a wide westward sweep round the South Atlantic on the outward voyage, a straight run from the Cape of Good Hope to Cape Verde, touching at St. Helena, on the return. The homeward bound ships could therefore refresh at St. Helena and gather the fruits and kill the animals that had been put there. The outward fleets, though unable to use St. Helena, preferred not to stop anywhere west of the Cape of Good Hope because of the difficulty of rounding the Cape when sailing close to the shore. Giving the continent a wide berth, they struck northwards and made all haste to reach Mozambique and their other East African ports before

the end of the monsoon on which they depended to cross the Indian Ocean. If they did not get to Mozambique before the end of September they would have to wait there a whole season. The East African harbours, supplemented by St. Helena on the return voyage, therefore sufficed the Portuguese as victualing stations.

At the end of the sixteenth century the pioneers of the Indian Ocean trade lost their monopoly of it. The accession of Philip II to the throne of Portugal enabled him to exclude his rebellious Dutch subjects from the carrying trade of Lisbon, on which their lives depended. Some Dutchmen had been in the Portuguese service in the East, and were able to betray its secrets to their countrymen. The futile search for a north-east passage was abandoned, and a mania for fitting out fleets for the Cape route to the Indies seized the United Provinces. There was great risk in this venture, but the profit on a voyage might easily be two hundred per cent. The wealth thus acquired helped the Dutch to carry on their struggle with Spain, and there was the additional political advantage that Holland's gain was Spain's loss. The rebels would never make peace with their enemy except on terms which allowed them to continue the eastern trade; and the truce of 1609 allowed it.

The early Dutch voyages were attended by great dangers. But a worse disadvantage than the forces of Nature or of the Portuguese was the competition among themselves. Prices in the East rose, selling prices in Europe fell. Jan van Oldenbarneveldt understood that only amalgamation and monopoly would prevent this, as well as give efficient organisation for dealing with Eastern princes and protecting the fleets at sea. Overcoming strong resistance, he compelled the competing merchants in 1602 to form the United Chartered East India Company, the world's first joint stock company on the grand scale.

The first half of the seventeenth century saw the establishment of the Dutch company at many forts and factories in the East. Fleets in convoy made regularly the slow passage between the Texel and the Strait of Sunda, and from 1611 on the outward voyage they followed the route south and east of Madagascar, which the Portuguese had seldom used. Moreover, the



Dutch never took possession of the Portuguese posts on the East African coast, though they did hold St. Helena for a time. Because they had no Mozambique, and because the Cape of Good Hope was the only landfall made by both outward and homeward fleets, the Dutch made a practice of calling at Table Bay for refreshment. The English for similar reasons did the same, and in 1620 two visiting captains hoisted the English flag; but nothing came of it.

Refreshment was badly needed. Six months was the average length of the voyage from Europe to the Indies in the seventeenth century. For most of that time the crews went without fresh meat, fruit and vegetables, and short of water. They had never heard of vitamins, but they knew well enough what it meant to be short of them. Van Riebeeck, on his voyage out in 1652, entered in his diary:

"March 12. Death of a child of the chief surgeon from scurvy—buried in the evening—all the rest are well—water supply getting low. Men placed on allowance.

"March 20. Captain Turver coming on board, reports that there is no more than one month's supply of water and beer on board his ship."

A month after his arrival two ships entered Table Bay from Holland, one having lost 45 men on the way and the other 85; and "many still sick on board". These circumstances had induced the Dutch and the English to call at the Cape both outward and homeward. At the Fresh River in Table Valley the water-casks were filled. If there were Hottentots in the neighbourhood cattle and sheep might be got by barter. Letters would be written and left, for the first fleet going in the opposite direction, under a stone on which might be written: "The *London* arrived the 10 of M here from Surat bound for England and depar the 20 dicto 1622 Richard Blyth Captane. Heare under looke for letters." Many such stones were inscribed and placed in suitable spots; some of them, by a happy coincidence, on the site of the future General Post Office in Cape Town.

The utility of the Cape as a calling-place gave rise to the

idea of a permanent occupation. There was once a scheme for a joint occupation by the Dutch and English companies; but after the English interlopers at Amboina had been "massacred" in 1623 no more was heard of it. The final impetus was given by the wreck of the East Indiaman *Haarlem* in Table Bay in 1647. There was no loss of life, and the cargo, including vegetable seeds and garden tools, was saved. The crew camped at Green Point, grew vegetables and bartered cattle and sheep from the Hottentots. They returned to Holland in the next homeward-bound fleet and a report on the advantages of a permanent post at the Cape was submitted to the Directors. That report led in due course to the despatch of the little expedition under Jan van Riebeeck which arrived in Table Bay on April 6, 1652.

Van Riebeeck's party consisted exclusively of employees of the Company. Its tasks were to build an earthen fort for defence against the Hottentots, to plant a vegetable garden, to obtain cattle and sheep by barter, to supply these commodities to the Company's ships and to care for the sick members of the crews who were left ashore to recover.

For more than two centuries from this time—until the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869—the settlement at the Cape existed mainly for purposes related to the trade of Europe with India. For much of that period the crews of the passing ships were the chief or even the only consumers of South African exports. In Van Riebeeck's time about twenty-five ships a year, on an average, touched at the Cape, and almost all were Dutch. By the 1780's the yearly average had risen to 164, and more than half were foreign.

Before 1869 the Cape had something of the strategic importance that has belonged to the Suez region since that time. International rivalry for trade and power in the East extended to the half-way house that could serve as a naval base for defending the route; or, what was more, for attacking any who used it. The power of Holland had reached its maximum, and was about to decline, at the moment when Van Riebeeck sailed for the Cape. That was 1651, the year in which the English Navigation Act struck the first serious blow at Dutch maritime supremacy. Thenceforward Table Bay, like a mirror, reflected every move in the international game of Eastern power-politics.

A stone castle begins to rise above its foundations on the flank of Cape Town; that is because their High Mightinesses the States-General are at war with the restored Charles II of England. The work proceeds feverishly, then is suddenly abandoned: peace has followed De Ruyter's audacity in the Medway. Again, the work is resumed, because Louis XIV with Charles II in his train has launched his long prepared attack on the Netherlands.

The seventeenth century was succeeded by the eighteenth, and Holland was no longer a great Power. The fate of the Cape depended on the part played by the Dutch in the world-wide conflict of Britain and France. When these Powers took opposite sides in the War of the Austrian Succession, in 1744, an elaborate extension of the fortifications at the Cape was begun. The Seven Years' War brought great prosperity to the Cape, as the ships of both countries came in great numbers and bid against each other for supplies. But Holland was neutral and her possession of the colony was not endangered.

In the next war, that of the American Revolution, Holland was ultimately involved. Britain immediately determined to seize the Cape, France to forestall her. Two squadrons raced southwards. They clashed at Porto Praya in the Cape Verde Islands, the French Admiral Suffren took some prizes and got away some hours ahead of his enemies. He landed troops at Simon's Bay in time to prevent a British attack, and the rival squadron did no more than capture a few ships in Saldanha Bay. From 1781 to 1784 the French garrison made Cape Town a "little Paris" and then left it in the hands of its Dutch owners. The future Jacobin and Director, Barras, was one of the occupying troops.

It was thus only to be expected that when Britain, France and Holland again came to grips the seizure of the Cape would have a place in military plans. This time the execution of the plan could be covered by a show of legality. Pichegru invaded Holland, the Patriot Party was helped into power by its French friends and the Prince of Orange fled to England. The British force which came to Simon's Bay in 1795 was authorised by the Prince to take possession of the colony on his behalf and to hold it till he should be restored to power. Party divisions—

Orange and Patriot—among the local officials and colonists weakened the defence, and after the arrival of British reinforcements the place was soon surrendered. Though it was returned to Holland—not to the East India Company, now defunct—by the Treaty of Amiens, the outbreak of a new war was the occasion of a second and final conquest. The British troops that entered Cape Town early in 1806 had been in mid-Atlantic while Nelson was winning his last and decisive victory. Britain's dominion of the sea, of the route to India and of the Cape of Good Hope, was secure for a century. At the peace she insisted on retaining this possession, strategically so important as the gateway to India. The sum of £6 millions was credited to Holland on account of it in the post-war financial settlement.

When the Cape Colony, a century and a half old, came into British hands, its population had already undergone experiences, and been subjected to influences, that were to play a large part in shaping the history of the country to the present day.

First among the influences was the Company, mercenary, monopolistic, penny-wise, endowed with despotic power in its own theatre of operations. It would be difficult to exaggerate the effect on the colonial population of four or five generations of life under this counting-house régime. The Dutch East India Company was the first of the powerful monopolistic corporations, and has been succeeded by many others. What was peculiar about its position at the Cape was that it was not merely the only buyer and the only seller: it was also the government, executive, legislature and judicature. It was the judge in its own case.

Monopoly was the air breathed by the Company and its officials. The charter guaranteed it this monopoly, east of the Cape, against other Dutchmen; the sharp sword guaranteed it against foreigners. The Englishmen at Amboina were slain. Every year the *hongi* fleet sailed round the Moluccas to destroy surplus crops of cloves or nutmegs; the output must be kept down to a minimum, the price in Europe up to a maximum. Villages were burnt down, populations uprooted. With the parsimony of the pettiest tradesman the Company gave orders to save a guilder here, a stuiver there.

But for the oath of allegiance which bound the Directors to the States-General, the Company was a sovereign power in the East. It had its own army and navy, governed its own territory and made treaties with eastern princes. Its shares were very widely distributed among the Dutch people, but attempts by the shareholders to exercise some control, or even to compel the publication of the Company's accounts, were treated as impertinence and mutiny. From first to last the accounts were never published. The States-General should have stopped such abuses, but it did not: power was so organised that their High Mightinesses and the Company's seventeen directors were largely the same people.

In spite of oaths to the contrary, the whole personnel from the XVII downwards was less concerned with the Company's welfare than with private enrichment, largely at the Company's expense. Salaries were low, but were corruptly supplemented. An under-merchant in the service was paid £40 a year; but he cheerfully bribed the Directors £291 13s. 4d. (the standard rate) to get his appointment. Like England, Holland had her Nabobs; but when the Company's days were over there were still Dutch families proud of the fact that none of their members had ever entered its service.

For its first five years the settlement at the Cape was merely a Company post, a branch office, in which all the white inhabitants were employees. The post did not flourish much. As in Virginia and elsewhere it was discovered that the motive of private profit was needed for the success of a farming enterprise. After much delay the Directors agreed with Van Riebeeck that private settlers, "Free Burghers", would serve the Company's purposes at the Cape more economically than a few platoons of soldiers on fatigue duty. In 1657, accordingly, the first handful of employees took their discharge and were given land, credit and instructions. They were settled along the Liesbeeck River in what is now the Cape Town suburb of Mowbray.

Slowly, very slowly, other discharged servants of the Company were added to the number. The Company's servants were not all Dutchmen. In 1691 a fifth were foreigners; by 1778 two-thirds were foreigners, mostly German. At the Cape

this proportion had been reached at the beginning of the eighteenth century; it was in the military personnel that the preponderance of Germans was most noticeable. Of the early settlers who left descendants about a half were Dutch, more than a quarter German. The biggest element in the remainder was French, but they will need some special attention.

Before the French came the life of a generation had passed since the original settlement of 1657. The colonists had in that time learnt the nature of the problems with which the Company's régime presented them. The Company wanted them to grow wheat, which it would buy from them at a "fair price". When the crops were ripe the farmers wanted to know what this price would be. Van Riebeeck dared not tell them, since the price of about 2s. 3d. a bushel, which the Directors had fixed upon, was less than half of what the farmers regarded as a necessary minimum. The price was raised, though insufficiently. Tobacco was a paying crop, though the Hottentots came by night to steal the growing plants. When the settlers took steps to protect themselves from this danger, the Government forbade the growing of tobacco as it might lead to trouble with the Natives. Above all, cattle-trading with the Hottentots, which a visiting Commissioner had allowed the farmers shortly after their first establishment on the land, was forbidden a year later. The Company wanted this lucrative trade for itself, and accused the colonists of paying eight or ten times "what the cattle were worth"—that is, what the Company was prepared to pay. The prohibition was not obeyed.

The conflict between the settlers and their monopolistic trading government became sharper as the numbers of the former increased. Dutch colonists arrived in small numbers, but in 1688 the Frenchmen came. They were Huguenots who had fled to Holland after—a few of them before—the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. In 1688 and the following decade or two some two hundred of them, men, women and children, accepted the Company's offer of settlement at the Cape. The Governor, Simon van der Stel, was careful in allotting farms to them to intersperse them well with Dutch colonists, and the Huguenots did not form more than one-eighth of the white population of the colony. Most of them settled in the upper

valley of the Berg River, at Drakenstein and French Hoek. The French names of the farms, many of which have remained in the same Huguenot families till the present day, are a memorial to their pioneering efforts.

Few as they were, they have left other and more important memorials over the whole of South Africa. Being exiles for conscience sake they were no trimmers in religion, but Calvinists of the rigorous sort. The earlier settlers were Calvinists in name, but being discharged sailors and soldiers of the Company's service, drawn from every part of Protestant Europe, they were not fanatics. The new element changed the religious tone of the colony and implanted in its people an orthodoxy and ecclesiastical discipline that would remain for centuries. The Huguenots contributed also a higher cultural standard, a spirit of rebellion against oppression—the older inhabitants were full of this too, and were glad to be reinforced—and some of them had an expert knowledge of viticulture.

For years the Huguenots argued with the government about a French schoolmaster, about a French-speaking clergyman and French services in their church. Some of the original immigrants never learned Dutch. But their children were bilingual and in the third generation the knowledge of French died out. There had been so much intermarriage that there was no longer a French section of the population.

The amalgamation, complete as it was, might not have proceeded so quickly if the two sections had not been drawn together by common grievances. The earliest colonists had suffered from the Company's monopoly both as buyer and as seller. The permission, sometimes conceded and occasionally withdrawn, to trade freely with passing ships after they had been three days in the Bay was a slight mitigation of the hardship. The illegal trade with the Hottentots was of greater importance. But at the end of the century a greater menace than the Company itself was presented by the Company's servants. A passing Commissioner-General had granted Simon van der Stel a farm—Constantia, destined to be world-famous for its wine and an architectural monument for tourists to admire. In 1699 he retired to live there and a grateful Company appointed his son Willem Adriaan to succeed him.

The new Governor was no worse than his colleagues who made illicit fortunes in the East. But the Cape offered little scope for such ambitions. The most that could be attempted by the younger Van der Stel was to get a Commissioner to make him a land-grant, then himself to give more land to a man of straw and acquire it back from him, so building up the princely estate of Vergelegen in Hottentots Holland. Thousands of vines were planted, thousands of sheep and cattle pastured on runs hidden behind the Hottentots Holland mountains. Slaves and implements belonging to the Company were put to the Governor's private use; it was difficult to distinguish the Company's representative from the landlord of Vergelegen. A gang of fishermen at the secluded but windy harbour of Gordon's Bay provided food for the slaves, and unofficial fishermen were warned off the grounds. The monopolies of the sale of meat and wine were sold to the Governor's stooges. The Governor's father and brother and a few leading officials vied with him in large-scale agriculture.

Except for wheat, this official clique would soon produce enough of every commodity to supply the whole available market. In their private capacity they came to that market as sellers. In their official capacity they were the only buyers. The colonists might well ask themselves how they were supposed to make a living.

In face of this danger Dutch and French drew together. A list of complaints was secretly compiled and sent to Batavia, but no notice was taken of it. Then a memorial to the Directors was drawn up by Adam Tas of Stellenbosch and signed by sixty-three colonists. Thirty-one of the names were French. The Governor came to hear of these proceedings, arbitrarily arrested Tas and others, used wine and the threat of force to get signatures to a counter-petition. The original draft of the memorial was seized, but the fair copy was then safely on its way to Holland.

The Directors dared not overlook it. They had enemies at home who would welcome any chance of probing into the corruption of the Company, and a thorough enquiry would be most embarrassing to the *Heeren Majores* themselves. They hastened to recall the Governor, to redress some of the



grievances and to forbid trading and farming by officials in the future.

The colony then settled down to the placid and regular development which continued through most of the eighteenth century. The Directors had had enough of colonists and gave no further encouragement to emigration. Most of the inhabitants at the time of the British occupation were descended from settlers who had come in the Van der Stel period or earlier.

## CHAPTER II

### THE AFRIKANERS

DURING the eighteenth century a new people evolved in South Africa, shaped out of the given human material by the peculiar geographical, economic and political forces of the country. The new people is described by travellers as divided, not horizontally, but vertically, into three classes.

The inhabitants of Cape Town were the first class encountered by the visitor. Before the end of the Company's rule Cape Town was said to contain more than twelve hundred houses. They charmed the beholder by their neatness and cleanliness, though this impression was sometimes modified by the smell of the oil applied by the slaves to their hair. Many of the houses had some claim to architectural beauty, a claim conceded by the taste of modern critics. They were double-storied, square-fronted, sash-windowed, square-shuttered, and the gables and pediments, fanlights and wrought-iron railings are much admired. Each had its flat *stoep* in front, and as these were of varying heights they gave the street an appearance of picturesque irregularity. The houses were whitewashed and accentuated the glaring brilliance of the summer sun.

All the trade of the colony was legally a Company monopoly, yet every inhabitant of Cape Town, official and unofficial, was in fact a trader. Rumour reported that *Mijnheer This* or *Mevrouw That* had got in a stock of some commodity, and the public collected in a casual way at the house indicated. The goods might have been smuggled from a passing ship, or brought in from the householder's farm in the country, or from another farm. Imported goods were sold to colonists, colonial produce to the visiting crews. With this business most of the inhabitants combined that of taking in lodgers and boarders. Every house was both shop and inn, and the townsmen had a bad reputation with local farmers and people from the ships for cunning and extortion.

The Cape Town people had a good deal of social contact with officialdom and with overseas visitors. The young ladies learned French and English, went to balls, tried to follow the fashions of Europe and were conscious of the distinctions of birth and official rank. The townsmen invested much of their money in slaves, who were not only used directly but hired out to others.

In the neighbourhood of Cape Town the second type of colonists were settled, the wheat and vine growers. These were to be found in the Cape peninsula, the valleys of the Eerste, the Louwrens and the Berg Rivers and on the neighbouring hills. All this was the *Boland*, the Overland, which was "over" in relation to the high interior only in the sense that London is "up" from Snowdon or Ben Nevis. The farmers of the Boland were a stable and fairly civilised community. The great white-washed gabled houses of the eighteenth century, even more distinctive than the contemporary town-houses, and still the centres of prosperous farms today, remain as evidence of this civilisation. Dozens of such architectural treasures lie within fifty miles of Cape Town. Their slave-bell-towers remind the student of the "peculiar institution" on which this kind of farming was based.

The wealthier farmers of the Boland dispensed a lavish hospitality. This was made possible by large-scale and diversified farming, and a self-sufficiency which in some cases extended to the practice by the farm slaves of a great many of the useful arts. The farmers catered for a small market and were not rich in money.

Neither the town burghers nor the gentry of the Boland were as distinctive a product of the colony, or as important in their influence on its future development, as the third group—the pastoralists of the interior. These *Veeboere*, no less than the other two classes, were brought into being by the Company's policy.

In settling the first colonists on the land, the Directors aimed at securing provisions for the fleets at little cost to the Company. Cattle-barter, a lucrative trade, was at first denied to the farmers, but the prohibition could not be enforced. A meat-trading monopoly was then created and sold to the highest

bidder, who could make his own terms with the farmers and must sell to the Company at fixed prices. By the end of the seventeenth century the colony was producing more agricultural supplies than were needed for the original purpose, whereas the demand for meat was still unsatisfied. To hold the settlers to their prescribed task, the authorities at Batavia were compelled to import the surplus wheat of the Cape, but as the grain of India was cheaper this policy meant an unnecessary loss for the Company. It was bad business.

When the agitation against W. A. van der Stel and his official friends added insult to injury, it was obvious that there were too many colonists already. No further encouragement to emigration was given, though employees who were stationed at the Cape could and did take their discharge there. In 1717 the policy of restriction was carried a step further: no more farms in freehold were to be granted. By closing almost all the doors to the colonists, and leaving just one open, the Directors canalised the activities of the country in that one direction. Stock farming was allowed.

The earlier farmers held their lands in freehold, but it was open to them to use additional grazing land on another tenure. Beyond the outer limits of settlement the farmer could have his cattle-post on public land, protected in his occupation by a government licence. Before 1717 these posts belonged to men who were established on freehold land nearer to Cape Town. The cattle were looked after by the farmer's son, or perhaps a soldier given indefinite leave of absence to earn a living in some such way as this. Life on these cattle-posts had great attractions for young men; it was the life of adventure, of hunting, of brushes with Bushmen and Hottentots, of plunder perhaps, of release from the trammels of civilisation. This was the freedom in which many youths grew up. It developed in them a hankering that would drive some of their descendants beyond the Equator.

If a colonist grew wheat and vines in Stellenbosch or Drakenstein and kept cattle and sheep at a post in the Breede River valley, he soon discovered that the pastoral side of the business was the profitable side. Stock could walk to market and would fetch a reasonable price; apart from the natural

increase, more could be got cheaply from the Hottentots. Wheat and wine hardly paid, the market was precarious, the transport to Cape Town difficult. Wagons had to cross the sandy and roadless waste of the Cape Flats, not yet bound down by the sour fig and the Port Jackson wattle.

When, therefore, no more freehold farms were to be got from the government, the colonists were quite satisfied with grazing licences as a substitute. The cattle post or *leenings-plaats* (loan place) was no longer a mere appendage of a wheat and wine farm. The newer settlers, who were to a large extent the old farmers' sons and ticket-of-leave soldiers who were accustomed to the frontier life, had no other farms than their loan places. The pioneer chose his abode, obtained his licence or *ordonnantie* in Cape Town, and soon established the custom that this entitled him to a circular area with a radius measured by walking a horse for half an hour in each direction, or to an equivalent area of a different shape. In theory, then, a farmhouse was one hour's walking pace from any of its neighbours. The authorities saw to this, or the neighbours did so for them. The average size of these estates was over 6000 acres.

At first no charge was made for the grant. Later a fee of £2 8s., ultimately raised to £4 16s. a year for each loan place was imposed. These fees became one of the biggest items in the revenue of the Cape government. They were called "recognition money", recognition of the Company's ownership of the land. The grants had to be renewed annually. The renewal could be refused. Yet in spite of the fact that many farmers were years in arrear with their payments hardly any was ever disturbed in his possession. The colonists came to regard these loan places as their property in all but name. They sold them for prices which could not possibly be justified by the value of the *opstal* (farm buildings) alone. But the buyers would often be expansive neighbours, rather than young men starting in life. These would go beyond the limits of settlement and stake claims to new farms, at no cost beyond the annual payment of recognition money. This was their birthright.

There was one significant limitation on the farmer's power over his loan place: he could not subdivide it. Here was a sharp distinction between the new tenure and the old freehold of the

more civilised districts. Roman-Dutch law, unlike English law, divided landed property equally among the sons of an intestate owner. Custom enforced the same practice when wills were made. But the loan place was not the farmer's property. It could not be divided among his sons. When he died, the next generation would very likely have already taken up new grants on the furthest borders of the colony. The place would then be sold as a unit, and the proceeds divided. As these people were prolific, childbirth easy, infant mortality low, the borders of the colony were advanced outward with corresponding speed.

By 1730 the migration had reached the Olifants River to the north, the Great Brak in the east. Then it flowed over the passes of the coastal mountains into the Bokkeveld and the Little Karoo. Leaping the barren Great Karoo, the northern movement had led by 1770 to the settlement of the Roggeveld and Nieuwveld mountains and the high plains immediately beyond. From the Nieuwveld an advance had been made eastward to the Camdeboo, the present Aberdeen district. By the same date, 1770, the other stream of migration had flowed from the Little Karoo down the Long Kloof to the mouth of the Gamtoos. In the 'seventies the eastern frontier was moved onward, all along its line, to reach the Great Fish and Bushman's Rivers. There the advance stopped. The Bantu migration had reached the same line from the other direction.

The cattle and sheep farmers lived a life of the utmost simplicity. They built houses that travellers likened rather to barns or hovels, made of earth in some districts, of the loose flaked stones that were plentiful in others. Two rooms might suffice for the whole family; one room in the remotest and most primitive places. Meat was the staple food, bread a rare luxury for which some families had lost the taste. The diet varied, of course, from one district to another. Some stock farmers grew a little fruit and wheat. Some had cattle, but in other parts only sheep would thrive. Some were energetic and had many products to take to market; others were lazy and lived merely by the natural increase of their flocks. Clothes were unpretentious. Children were taught the elements by peripatetic schoolmasters, commonly discharged soldiers or sailors, who moved on from farm to farm as their pupils had received a

sufficient smattering or their own repertoire was exhausted. The Bible was commonly the only book in the household.

It was a homogeneous society. There were differences of wealth, but they did not produce great differences in the manner of living. One farmer had more cattle and sheep, and could proudly display a herd all of the same colour—an enviable possession which his neighbours might not be able to rival. But there were not great differences, except as between the nearer and the remoter districts, in housing, clothing, furniture, diet or education. Since the frontier was open and anyone could have a loan place, social distinctions were not hereditary and were no bar to marriage. This equality, which did not exist in the urban society of Cape Town, was natural on the *platteland* because every farmer was economically independent. There the strongest prejudices prevented the young man from earning a living, however remunerative, as the paid employee of another.

As if in reflection of his loan tenure and his dependence upon the grazing flocks and herds, the pastoralist was not tied by feeling or habit to one spot. Families living on the snow-covered Roggeveld or Nieuwveld mountains trekked down in winter and spring to the Karoo plains, a vast commonage with no permanent possessors, and returned to the higher altitudes before the heat and drought of summer. Children who had been rocked to sleep by the jolting of the wagon grew up with the thought of migrating far to the north or east to find homes for themselves.

Some families made an annual journey to Cape Town, some went once in three or four years, some once in a lifetime. At least once in a lifetime it must needs be, to appear before the Matrimonial Court which had to certify that there were no legal impediments before a marriage could take place. An important lawsuit would necessarily take the farmer to the capital; the recognition money ought to be paid there annually, and the bills of the butchers' agents needed to be cashed. The agents travelled about the interior to buy stock, for which they gave bills payable in Cape Town. These sums were increased by the sale of a few commodities such as butter and soap; soap was made with sheep-tail fat and the *ganna* bush, whose

presence or absence in the veld had therefore some effect on migration and settlement.

The country visitor collected his cash and spent it on gunpowder, cloth, coffee, a few simple implements and articles of furniture, some brandy perhaps, and left the wicked city with all despatch. There was no desire to see the sights or share the pleasures of a society in which the simple countryman felt himself to be despised, and knew that he would be cheated. The return or "down" journey (involving perhaps an ascent of 3000 feet), like the "up" journey, might last weeks or even a couple of months. The wagon might be dismantled, and its parts and the contents taken over a pass on the backs of the oxen. Such a journey would exhaust the patience of a city man; the *Veeboer* had adapted himself to the pace of the ox.

At least once a year there was another journey to be made, a shorter one: to church. By the middle of the eighteenth century the frontiersmen had two churches that were more accessible than the old ones of the Boland. They were at Roodezand, the modern Tulbagh, and Swellendam. Even to these places the trek was a long one for many, but few would fail to appear at the communion service, *Nachtmaal*, once a year. The nearer inhabitants came four times. Some, however, would not come till there were another two or three children to be baptised.

On all the other Sundays and weekdays family prayers and Bible-reading took the place of the service. Whether the devotions were domestic or ecclesiastical, the Dutch Reformed Church kept a firm hold of the people and was their main link with civilisation. While their lives and thoughts were shaped largely by their geographical environment and the economic policy of the Company, there can be no doubt that the Calvinist religion was a primary factor in making them what they were. They went to church and revered the *dominie*, but there was little of the priest about him. They looked for salvation rather to the stern decrees of predestination. When this idea was associated with the Old Testament concept of a Chosen People, it was not difficult to see themselves as the objects of divine protection. Biblical stories of patriarchs and their sons and daughters, flocks and herds, maidservants and manservants, of deserts and mountains and trekking through the



wilderness, had a familiar ring to the *Veeboer*. He, too, could smite the Philistines hip and thigh.

The farmer's interest in the outside world, even in the nearer world of the Cape peninsula and the Boland, was slight. As the traveller Lichtenstein, a friendly observer who saw the colony during the Batavian occupation, remarked: "In an almost unconscious inactivity of mind, without any attractions towards the great circle of mankind, knowing nothing beyond the little circle which his own family forms around him, the colonist of those parts passes his solitary days, and by his mode of life is made such as we see him."

In the course of the eighteenth century, while three or four successive generations grew up under these conditions, the colonists developed their own distinctive language. That its formation owed very much to the Malay-Portuguese of the oriental slaves or to the broken speech of foreign settlers and Hottentots is hotly denied by modern philologists, who regard it as a development from seventeenth-century Dutch diverging from the development of the language in the Netherlands by the force of its own character. Some of its features reflect the influence of particular dialects spoken by early colonists; but it is an important fact that this isolated and apparently unchanging people did not maintain its old language in an archaic form as happened in Iceland or French Canada. Unnecessary inflections, grammatical gender and the old complexities of weak and strong verbs went by the board. New principles came into use. Where the attributive adjective had been inflected—or not—according to its gender and the nature of the word preceding it, its behaviour came to be determined by principles of euphony only. Difficult combinations of consonants were ruthlessly hacked apart; the first of the pair was retained, the second dropped, only to reappear when the word was inflected. The double negative, common in medieval Dutch but no longer used in Holland, established itself; he would be a bold philologist who denied that this usage was especially natural to the Huguenot. The meanings of words changed, and the vocabulary drew freely from the Native tongues of Africa and the East.

The new idiom, later to be called Cape Dutch or the *Taal*

(i.e. the language), and finally Afrikaans (which means African), was spoken for many generations before it was reduced to writing. The wandering pastoralist of the eighteenth century read the Bible, whose language was sufficiently archaic to allow his own spoken tongue to develop quite independently of it. The educated people of Cape Town and its neighbourhood, who were in regular contact with Dutch officialdom, and used the official language for reading and writing, must have modelled their speech much more closely upon it. It was not these people but the rustic semi-nomads of the interior that formed the nucleus of the future nation.

As their language came to be called Afrikaans, the people themselves assumed the name of Africans, *Afrikaners*. The colonist, from the beginning of the eighteenth century, also adopted as a badge of nationality the name of *Boer*, or farmer. This word was a contribution not of the stock farmers but of the tillers of the soil who overthrew W. A. van der Stel. Farmers, Africans—the names meant a turning of the back on Europe and the ways of living that connected one with Europe. The Company might, perhaps, have engendered a different spirit, though poor soil and lack of markets would in any case have made intensive colonisation difficult. But its policy had produced this exaggerated isolationism.

Europe in the eighteenth century experienced Enlightenment, Reason and Revolution; all these passed the African Farmer by. He carried his seventeenth-century inheritance forward into the nineteenth. When the influences of the new age thrust themselves right into his local politics he reacted promptly and violently against them. That reaction fills many pages of South African history. To understand it one must bear in mind, first, the circumstances which had formed the character of the Boer; second, the constitution and politics of the colony; third, the new frontier problem which caused Enlightenment, Reason and Revolution to reach Graaff-Reinet.

To say that the government of the colony was a bureaucracy would be technically correct but would give a false picture of the liberties of the *Veeboer* on his loan place. The Company had its servants at the Cape, graded in rank like the employees of any big firm, and the official world was a businesslike com-

munity of upper-merchants and merchants, under-merchants and book-keepers. A Commander was of higher rank than these, a Governor still higher. After 1691, when Simon van der Stel was promoted from Commander to Governor, the head of the colonial government was a man of that rank.

The Governor was assisted by a Council of Policy consisting of a number of senior officials, including two military officers. The members held their positions *ex officio*, and the Council contained no representative element. One of the Councillors was the Independent Fiscal, whose position was unique in that he took no orders from the Governor but was responsible immediately to the Directors. He had a large independent authority in financial and judicial matters, acted as prosecutor in the Court, and was supposed to be a check on the corrupt behaviour of the Governor. Yet the underpaid Fiscal was as much exposed to temptation as anyone else.

The Council of Policy, the highest executive and legislative authority, was the only organ of government in which the people had no share. It was obvious that such a body was unlikely to administer impartial justice in a community where the economic interests of the governors conflicted so sharply with those of the governed. So, while the Court of Justice consisted mainly of the same persons as the Council, three "burgher councillors" sat with the others when cases involving colonists were tried. Similarly, two burghers shared with two officials the work of the Matrimonial Court, before which all couples had to appear before marriage to prove that there were no legal impediments. For some of the remotest settlers this regulation was, as we have seen, the occasion of the only journey to Cape Town in a lifetime. Again, two burghers and two officials and a President constituted the Orphan Chamber, which protected the interests of the children of a widow or widower who remarried, and sometimes acted as trustee.

In the earliest stages of the colony's development these burgher representatives were selected by the government from lists drawn up at meetings of the handful of colonists then in the country. As soon as the settlement had expanded beyond parochial limits this method was abandoned. The burgher councillors retired in rotation, and before any did so they drew

up a list of names, double the number of the places to be filled. From this list the government made its choice. It was a system of co-option tempered by selection.

To the people beyond the Cape Flats the institutions of local government were more important and interesting than those that functioned in Cape Town. After the foundation of Stellenbosch it was necessary to station some official there to represent the central authorities. Further dispersion in the eighteenth century caused a repetition of this arrangement further and further afield. By the time of the first British conquest the colony was divided into four districts, the Cape, Stellenbosch, Swellendam and Graaff-Reinet. In each except the Cape there was a Landdrost, a paid magistrate who presided over the local court and attended to all the interests of Government.

The Landdrost was assisted in his judicial and local government functions by six Heemraden, ordinary citizens serving without pay in much the same spirit and manner as the English Justices of the Peace. Unlike the latter, the Heemraden could not act singly or on their own initiative. Their court dealt with petty civil cases and handled such administrative matters as local trading, the maintenance of roads and passes and pontoons on the principal rivers. A revenue was derived from these sources and from a tax on stock. Like a feudal lord, the Stellenbosch court had a milling monopoly, and all the local authorities could requisition the labour, wagons and oxen of the inhabitants. In the Cape district there was no Landdrost, but a Court of Commissioners, complete with burgher councillors, dealt with petty cases.

At a still lower level, and closer to the individual farmer, stood the *Veldwachtmeester* who was changed under the Batavian régime into the Field-Cornet. He served a ward or field-cornetcy that was to be not more than thirty-six miles in diameter. He had some judicial authority, notably over the punishment of slaves and in settling boundary disputes, and it was noted that he seldom failed to have close ties of blood or friendship with one of the disputing parties, so that his judgment was not always regarded as impartial. He knew all the farmers in his ward personally, did regular tours of inspection,

made the laws and decrees of the government known to all. The Field-Cornet received no pay, but was exempt from the ordinary charges and taxes on his land.

The system of local government had also its military side, and of all the institutions this was the one that concerned the inhabitants most intimately. In the earliest days of the settlement the men had been formed into a militia, controlled in each district by a *Krygsraad* which made appointments and promotions subject to the approval of the government. Twice a year the militia turned out for drill and inspection, and once annually in each district the force paraded before the Governor. There were both foot and mounted units.

Before the end of the seventeenth century the colony waged a full-dress war against the Hottentots and had to defend itself against the plundering raids of Bushmen. In 1715 bands of the pygmies came down from their mountains, murdered herdsmen and drove off hundreds of cattle and sheep. As the farmers pushed further inland the Bushmen, from their last mountainous retreats, struck back with desperate boldness. This presented the militiamen with a problem of defence that interested them vastly more than the parade ground evolutions at the Drostdy each October. Indeed, their absence from home for this ceremony was accepted by the Bushmen as the best occasion for attack. Special means of defence were devised to meet it.

The unit appropriate for the purpose was the Commando, destined to be used successively against Bushmen, Bantu and Englishmen. Its name and spirit have spread even more widely in recent times, when Commandos have gone into action in Europe against the most dangerous enemies in the world. The most modern Commandos have more than a fanciful or romantic continuity with the most ancient. And in South African history this organisation has had a development that obscures its origin as a means of defence against the most primitive and incoherent people of the country.

Between the claims of the Bushmen and those of any other people, whether Hottentots, Bantu or Europeans, no compromise was possible. The Bushmen's lands were his hunting-grounds. He could not tolerate the appearance of a settled, an agricultural or even a pastoral people upon them. Year after

year, as he realised that his last remaining possessions were being encroached upon, he descended upon the farms, killed white people and Hottentots, burned houses and drove off the stock. Questioned by a Hottentot messenger in 1738, they explained "that they did it to drive the white men out of their country; that they were living in the Bushmen's country; that this was only a beginning and they would do the same to all the people living thereabouts. That if that did not help, and the people did not depart thence, they would burn all the corn that was now standing in the fields, when it was ripe, so that they would be forced to leave the Bushmen's country."

The farmers could not wait for the slow response of Cape Town and its garrison. In every neighbourhood one of them held the rank of Field Corporal, later to be called *Veldwacht-meester*. This leader summoned his neighbours for commando service; a mounted troop turned out, each man bringing his own arms, horse and scanty supplies, with ammunition provided by the government. The trail was followed, the enemy pursued into the mountains, as many shot as were seen and would not surrender, and the booty recaptured if possible. After a week or two of this the party might return empty-handed, or it might have recovered most of what had been lost.

By 1774 the depredations were so serious that the government took a step towards co-ordinating the isolated reprisals. A Field Commandant was appointed for the whole of the northern frontier—that is, the Bushman frontier—and under his command the burghers fought a regular campaign to subdue the irrepressible enemy. Only six years later Adriaan van Jaarsveld was appointed Field Commandant of the *eastern* frontier, a very different matter. The Commando system was to be turned against the Bantu, a people many ages ahead of the Bushmen in culture and organisation.

A generation later, as has been shown, the *Veldwacht-meester* became the Field-Cornet, with judicial and administrative functions. But his military responsibility remained.

When the colony passed into British hands, its Boer or Afrikaner people had developed a distinct philosophy and practice of government. When the savage threatened, the farmer was called on Commando by the Field-Cornet, on the

responsibility of the Commandant. The government supplied the ammunition. The same Field-Cornet, and other representative farmers called Heemraden, settled the little disputes among the farmers themselves. The Landdrost was expected to see things from the same point of view as "the public". As for the distant authorities that appointed him, they sent the powder and they sanctioned the farmer's tenure of his loan place. It would be difficult to think of any other useful purpose that they served.

### CHAPTER III

## SLAVES AND HOTTENTOTS

THE recorded history of South Africa begins with a hostile encounter between Portuguese and Hottentots at Mossel Bay. But the Natives of the country were not to be seriously threatened in their possession of it or in their manner of life till the Dutch made a permanent settlement in Table Valley.

Van Riebeeck had no sooner landed than a band of people whom the Europeans called Beachrangers made their appearance and established themselves as hangers-on of the white community. They were an impoverished and disorganised set of Hottentots who had supported a bare existence on shellfish and other natural products of the peninsula. Now they made their kraal on the lower slopes of Signal Hill, began to tender their services as herdsmen and to allow their children to collect firewood and go into domestic service, and for the rest—according to the white men—begged and stole. There were not more than a few dozen of them altogether.

The Beachrangers were not representative of the Hottentot race. Better organised clans, possessing large flocks and herds, travelled slowly round a grazing area which included the Cape peninsula. Their fires were seen far to the north; messengers heralded their arrival; then thousands of cattle were seen behind Table Mountain and the nomads pitched their camp. A brisk barter, cattle for trinkets, was begun. Many times this process was repeated. It might happen that the tribesmen had no beasts to spare for sale, but their thrift and caution usually broke down under the temptation of tobacco, brandy and arrack.

After a time some of them showed resentment at the permanent intrusion of the settlers upon their lands. They murdered a few and drove off their cattle. Twice the white men waged war upon them. After that they settled down to a quiet acceptance of the situation. As the stock of the nearer clans was bartered away the traders went further afield, and



tobacco and strong drink spread to the more distant peoples. Some suffered from diseases introduced from Europe and Asia; a foretaste of what was to come. In 1713 smallpox came. The white settlers suffered, and the slaves more severely. The Hottentots, as an organised and self-conscious nationality, were wiped out. Tribal names were forgotten, except in the remotest parts. This catastrophe happened just four years before the stopping of freehold grants, and about that time the rapid expansion of the colony into the interior began. The Hottentots had bartered away too many of their animals; their race itself was largely destroyed by smallpox; and after this the migrant farmers moved in to occupy their land.

Beyond the northern borders the tribal system stood the shock, and in those parts a few pure Hottentots are still found today. But the historical importance of their relations with the white invaders does not lie in this unimportant survival. It lies rather in the precedents that were set for the white man's relations with the Bantu, and in their effect on the people living to-day who are partly, but not purely, descended from the Hottentots.

The older race, even when its cattle and land had gone, could not satisfy the demands of the colonists for labour. And in the early days it lacked the stimulus of destitution. Before the Colony, therefore, lay the alternatives of white immigrant labour and of slavery. The future character of the country depended more upon the choice made between these than upon any other decision that it fell to the Directors to make. Historians have remarked that, if free white labourers had been preferred, South Africa would have developed into a true European colony like any of those north of the Mason and Dixon line.

But it may be doubted whether, in the earliest stages, this alternative was practical politics. Van Riebeeck was begging the Seventeen for slaves, and the Batavian authorities for industrious Chinese, before the first white settler had put his plough to the soil. Ships were sent out to capture Portuguese slavers off the West African coast, and a regular East Indiaman landed a captured cargo at the Cape in March, 1658. The free burghers had already complained that they could do nothing without

slaves. The few white labourers that were tried were too expensive. Given the difficulty of finding Europeans, Dutch or foreign, willing to become landowners in the new colony, one may suspect that the search for free labourers in any numbers would have been fruitless. The slaves were landed, some sold to the burghers and some retained by the Company. Did this transaction, on so tiny a scale, irrevocably determine the fate of the sub-continent?

In 1691 the white colonists numbered about 1000 and their slaves 386. Among these the men outnumbered the women by five to one, so that the continuance of slavery as a basis of the country's economy would depend on continued importations. As late as 1717 the future social character of the colony was still regarded as an open question. The members of the Council of Policy had been asked by the Directors to answer a number of questions, of which one concerned the relative advantages to the Cape of white settlers and of slaves. The commander of the garrison, Captain D. P. de Chavonnes, pleaded for white settlers, as helping to defend the colony and increase its revenue, and because of the danger to society of rebellious and criminal slaves. Every other member of the Council, including the Governor, took the opposite view. Slaves were cheap and they were docile. This view prevailed, and no further encouragement was given to emigrants from Holland. It has been seen that the grants of land in freehold were stopped at the same time. Professor Eric Walker regards the decision of 1717 as the principal turning-point in the whole history of South Africa.

The decision was questioned more than once in subsequent years. In 1743 the Baron van Imhoff, a Commissioner who visited the Cape, regretted that "most agriculturists in this colony are not so much farmers as lords of plantations, and many of them would think it a shame to work with their own hands". He tried to discourage the further dispersion of the population on loan places, and to bind the distant frontiers more closely to the capital. In 1768 J. W. Cloppenburg, the *Secunde* or Vice-Governor, drew up a report in the same spirit, recommending that no more loan places be granted and no more slaves imported, so that the poorer colonists should be

forced to work for others and a more closely knit society enabled to develop. These proposals were not adopted, and the social system of the colony continued to grow along the lines already marked out.

The landowners of the older settled districts were, therefore, slave-owning planters. The citizens of Capetown used slaves not only as domestic servants but as artisans whose labour was hired out. Slaves were also employed on the distant loan places of the interior, but there they were greatly outnumbered by Hottentot servants. The presence of Hottentots indicated the care of stock, and some desultory domestic service, while the thorough cultivation of the soil called for slaves.

During the eighteenth century, contact with slaves, Hottentots and Bushmen developed in the minds of the Europeans a set of attitudes and prejudices concerning race and colour. The first settlers had made distinctions of religion only, Christian and heathen. The baptised black was socially equal to a white Christian. But this principle was soon abandoned. As almost all black people were slaves, and almost all white people masters, skin-colour became a fairly accurate index of status. The Hottentots were regarded with contempt and the Bushmen with pitiless hostility. Even the instruction of slaves in Christianity was abandoned, since a baptised slave was in the earliest period thought to have a right to manumission. "Christian" became in practice equivalent to "white".

There is some difference of opinion whether the eighteenth-century colonists despised manual work or not. Some observers reported that they would not do a hand's turn on the farm or in the warehouse. "'Tis slaves' work! What are slaves for?" Other evidence suggests that a farmer had no rooted objection to manual labour in his own concerns, but regarded labour of any kind in another man's employment as the characteristic of the slave. Along both of these lines the prejudice was destined to grow after the eighteenth century was over.

Before the end of the Company's rule burgher militiamen are found refusing to drill when a dark-skinned man was promoted to corporal, though they had not objected to having him in the ranks. A frontier farmer, reports the traveller

Barrow, had riveted a pair of iron rings to the legs of a Hottentot boy, who was said to have hobbled about with them for ten years. General Vandeleur brought boy and master to his headquarters, had the rings removed from the Hottentot and fastened to the farmer's legs. "For the whole of the first night his lamentations were incessant; with a stentorian voice a thousand times he vociferated, '*Myn God! Is dat een maniere om Christian mensch to handelen?*'" ("My God! Is this a way to treat Christians?") His, however, were not the agonies of bodily pain, but the bursts of rage and resentment on being put on a level with one, as the boors call them, of the *Zwarte natie*, between whom and the *Christian mensch* they conceive the difference to be fully as great as between themselves and their cattle, and whom, indeed, they most commonly honor with the appellation of *Zwarte Vee*, black cattle."

George Thompson, another traveller, was surprised by the complacent manner in which a frontier Commandant described his service on thirty-two commandos by which 200 Bushmen were massacred. The same Commandant, on hearing of the killing and spoliation of some Bushmen by a party of Kaffirs, "spoke with detestation of the conduct of these intruders, and applauded the punishment inflicted upon them without seeming to be aware how close a resemblance existed between their own conduct and that of the Caffers".

These illustrations would have to be multiplied many dozens of times to give an adequate impression of the ideology of the "boor". The mastership of the white man, the obedient and respectful service of Hottentot and slave, were the axioms on which his social and political systems were based. Any tampering with that relationship meant the dissolution of the world to which he belonged. Given slavery, the cultural gulf between European and Hottentot, and the growth of an isolated colonial society out of touch with Europe, such an outlook was perhaps inevitable. But it was to have a pernicious development when slavery had been abolished, the cultural gulf narrowed, and the isolation broken in upon.

In the meantime the slave and Hottentot populations were undergoing a change that would add a new element to the future racial complexity of the country. The slaves were of very

various origins. The greater number is believed to have come from East Africa and Madagascar. There were other Africans from West Africa, chiefly Angola, and lastly, in smaller numbers, prisoners from the Eastern possessions of the Company. The males were far more numerous than the females, a disparity which naturally led to the cohabitation of men slaves with Hottentot women. There were also many offspring of slave women by white fathers.

From these beginnings miscegenation continued, in ever-increasing complexity, to produce a mixed race in which Hottentot, Bantu, Malagasy, Malay and European elements were confused. These people, proud of their superiority to the pure Hottentots, called themselves Bastards, a name afterwards abandoned in favour of the *Cape Coloured*. One section of them, the progeny of Europeans and of Hottentots of the Grigriqua or Chariguriqua tribe, passed beyond the north-western border of the colony during the eighteenth century and settled in the valley of the Orange River. Under missionary influence this tribe adopted the name of Griquas. Another fragment of them, descended mainly though not entirely from the East Indian slaves, was held together by its profession of the Moslem religion. Many slaves of other origins, whose religious instruction was neglected by their masters, became Mohammedans and were therefore absorbed by this community. To-day they are called, not altogether accurately, the Malays and are an important and distinctive element in the population of Cape Town and its neighbourhood.

Many racial differences were thus becoming blurred in the Cape's formative period. The distinction between slavery and freedom remained, but hardly connoted any practical advantages to the "free" Hottentots. They were thought of from the first as being in the colony but not of it. While tribes decayed, the Company maintained an out-of-date fiction by recognising, even appointing, chiefs. A Hottentot captain even beyond the colonial borders thought his authority insecure till he had received a gift of a copper-headed cane bearing the Company's monogram. The captains were expected to settle disputes among their own followers, whom the colonial courts disregarded unless they were involved in disputes with white men. The

Natives paid no taxes, but they had no land and few cattle. Unless they entered the service of the farmers, they were condemned to wander over the country or withdraw themselves to its most neglected and unnoticed by-ways. Our own age has invented a term which approximately describes their condition: they were Displaced Persons.

The age of the French Revolution, Napoleon and Wilberforce was, for the Cape Colony, the period in which the condition of the Hottentots ceased to be universally accepted as inevitable. They acquired friends ready to speak on their behalf in high places, though not very influentially at first. Difference of opinion, where before there had been unanimity, turned the despised outcasts into a "problem".

The new opinion was held by missionaries and a few officials. Mission work in South Africa may almost be said to have begun in 1799. The Moravian Georg Schmidt, who founded Genadendal in 1737, was so restricted by official pressure that he gave up his attempt after a few years. The Moravian Brethren re-founded the same station in 1792. When, however, Dr. Vanderkemp arrived in 1799 the explosive force of the London Missionary Society was injected into colonial politics, where it was to continue to play a vital part directly for more than a generation and indirectly to the present day.

The developments of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries have been permanently important for their influence on institutions, attitudes of mind and the structure of South African society. But after the arrival of the missionaries—and very largely because of it—the country entered a period in which the events themselves became historic memories powerful in their effects on national development. In retrospect, it was as if this date divided the forgotten influences of the people's infancy from the bitter memories of its later childhood.

Dr. Vanderkemp, after some discouraging experiences among the Bantu beyond the frontier, decided to devote himself to the Hottentots. The Batavian Governor, General Janssens, in 1803 granted him and the Rev. James Read a farm near Algoa Bay on which to found an "Institution". It was called Bethelsdorp. To the Hottentots it offered an alternative to service with the farmers, and many took advantage of this. The

L.M.S., moreover, within a few decades founded a number of new stations both in and outside the colony. Like Bethelsdorp, they were refuges for those who wished to escape farm labour.

Conventional opinion then and since has drawn a sharp distinction between the Moravian (and a few other) missions, where "habits of industry" were inculcated, and those of the London Missionary Society, which confined itself to the principles of religion and incidentally taught a dirty and ragged population to become independent and disrespectful. The distinction has certainly been overdrawn. The London Missions were mostly in the eastern districts and beyond the northern border, and it was largely because of their location that they differed from the stations in the older and more settled west as well as from those among the Bantu.

When the British slave trade was abolished in 1807 the slaves of the colony acquired a scarcity value, and the farmers looked with increasing interest to the wandering Hottentots as a source of labour. The "Institutions" which withdrew these from the market, as well as unsettling those already in service, therefore became doubly obnoxious. The farmers' complaints were heard with some sympathy by English Tory Governors, and led to the Earl of Caledon's Hottentot Ordinance of 1809. The objects of this were to stop vagrancy and to secure a labour force to the farmers. The shadowy jurisdiction of the "Captains" was abolished and their subjects fully subordinated to the colonial laws. Every Hottentot was required to have a fixed abode, which was registered with the Landdrost. Contracts of service for a month or longer were to be in writing and similarly registered. The Hottentot could not leave the farm without a pass from his employer, the ward without one from the Field-Cornet, or the district without one from the Landdrost. If unable to show a pass to any European who demanded it he could be arrested as a vagrant and dealt with—in practice assigned under contract to a farmer—by the Landdrost.

The complaint that Hottentots' children were fed by their fathers' employers without being under any obligation in return led to a further ordinance in 1812, providing that any child in these circumstances could be apprenticed to the farmer from the age of eight to that of eighteen. This arrangement tended

in fact to bind the child's father too, since he would not be willing to leave the farm without his son. And when one son's contract had expired, others would in the meantime have been entered into. Further, servants were commonly in debt to their employers and were tied to them by that circumstance. That wages should have been paid largely in kind, including brandy and tobacco, was inevitable in a community that had few dealings in money.

The year in which this second ordinance was passed, so far from witnessing an exhibition of gratitude to the government, found the frontier seething with anger and indignation. The farmers of the remoter districts had grown accustomed, in the previous century, to an official neglect which allowed them to discipline their dependants with little fear of interference from Cape Town. In 1811 this freedom was ended by the institution of a Circuit Court which brought the Cape Town judges on annual visitations to the drostdies. Since the missionaries, especially those of Bethelsdorp, had been listening eagerly to tales of the ill-treatment of servants by masters, they took advantage of the opportunity to lay a number of charges before the Circuit Court at Uitenhage and George in 1812.

The missionary Read, an injudicious man, had spoken wildly of "upwards of 100 cases of recent murders in Uitenhage"; twenty-two cases of all kinds were actually brought before the court. That eight or more charges of violence to servants, and others of withholding wages, were substantiated, shows that the protection which the new court offered to the servant class was not unnecessary. To the frontiersmen and their descendents the number of acquittals has appeared more significant. The "Black Circuit" has come to connote the bringing of frivolous charges against respectable burghers on the evidence of lying Hottentots; the tarnishing of decent reputations by the action of a band of fanatical and irresponsible missionaries. Yet it may well be believed that the passions were aroused not so much by the sense of injustice as by the very equality of the races before the law which the proceedings exhibited. "My God! Is this a way to treat Christians?"

The extent of the shock to conventional opinion may be gauged by some evidences of that opinion in the preceding



decade. In 1797 the Heemraden of Stellenbosch had refused to listen to a Hottentot's charge against his mistress for the withholding of wages. They doubted "whether a Hottentot had the right to sue a Citizen in their Court; and if this were allowed, would it not encourage the Hottentots to think that they were of the same standing as a citizen?" A few years later, under the Batavian régime, the Landdrost of Uitenhage wrote to the Governor that "it is difficult and often impossible to get the colonists to understand that the Hottentots ought to be protected by the laws no less than themselves, and that the judge may make no distinction between them and the Hottentots". Against this background the blackness of the Black Circuit stands out more clearly.

Shortly after this event a frontier farmer named F. C. Bezuidenhout was summoned to appear at Graaff-Reinet on a charge of ill-treating a Hottentot servant. The summons was repeated a number of times, but the accused declined to obey it. When in October, 1815, a party which included some Hottentot soldiers was sent to arrest him, he retired to a cave, fired upon his assailants and was then shot. His death provoked some of his relations and friends to plot rebellion and revenge. They tried unsuccessfully to get help from the Kaffir chief Gaika, and the small party of rebels eventually dispersed when opposed by troops and a commando of burghers. The ring-leaders were captured and, on the sentence of a special commission of the High Court, five of them were publicly hanged at Slagter's Nek, near Somerset East, in 1816. Lord Charles Somerset refused to mitigate the sentence, in spite of public opinion on the frontier. The loyal burghers who had assisted the troops thus found themselves partly responsible for the death of their friends, a responsibility they would never have incurred if they had foreseen it. Slagter's Nek became a potent cause of anti-British feeling among the Afrikaners, and has remained so to the present day.

In the meantime Vanderkemp had died, and Read was a poor advocate. The London missions, offspring of the Congregational Church, tended to fall into the anarchy which is the weak side of Independency. To counteract this the Directors of the society in 1819 sent Dr. John Philip to superintend its

affairs in the colony. Within three years he had become the regular spokesmen and avowed champion of the interests of the Hottentots. His connections with the Evangelical party in Britain, and its representatives at Westminster, enabled him to bring to their side stronger influences than even those of the colonial government. The weak position of the Tories in England made their Ministers unwilling to let the affairs of the Cape develop into material for Opposition attack. The Governor, Lord Charles Somerset, left the colony for good in 1826, in spite of the apparent power of the Beaufort connection. In 1828 it was the colonial government itself that devised the fiftieth ordinance, the most important single result of all the missionary propaganda.

The fiftieth ordinance abolished the pass system and allowed the Hottentots freedom of movement; it removed some abuses in the apprenticing of servants' children, though not abolishing the system; it limited the duration of oral contracts to one month and of written ones to a year; specifically guaranteed the right of Hottentots, which had been doubtful, to purchase and possess land in the colony; forbade payment of wages in liquor or tobacco; forbade the summary "domestic" correction of Hottentots, their arrest for vagrancy and their forced allocation to farmers. In most respects, though not all, it gave free persons of colour an equal legal status with Europeans. Philip, who was in England at the time, procured there an addition to the ordinance forbidding its amendment or repeal without the sanction of the British Government.

It was to be expected that this legal revolution would be followed by a wave of vagrancy and crime; but the extent of these consequences was greatly exaggerated in the colony. Like the "bandits" of 1789 in France, the lawless Hottentots were believed to be everywhere, expected to arrive everywhere, but never seen in the flesh.

The alarm of the farmers was increased when an Act of the British Parliament emancipated their slaves in 1834. Having lost their firm hold over one half of the labour supply, they were now to lose it over the other. The ex-slaves, when their period of apprenticeship expired in 1838, would be as uncontrollable as the Hottentots. In 1834 a complaisant Acting Governor

introduced an ordinance, which the new Legislative Council passed, to revive the principles which had just been abolished. Every humble official was required to apprehend all such persons found within his jurisdiction as "he may reasonably suspect of having no honest means of subsistence—or who cannot give a satisfactory account of themselves". In short, a supply of farm labour was to be guaranteed by the old means. The missionaries worked hard in opposition to the proposal, and Philip's prevision in having the fiftieth ordinance entrenched was rewarded. This measure was in effect a repeal of that ordinance, and required the assent of London; that assent was refused. Thus the new status of the free persons of colour as the equals, in most legal respects, of the Europeans was maintained against colonial hostility by the firmness of the British Government. After 1838 that equality was to be enjoyed by every inhabitant of the colony.

During the period of these agitations there was a class, the slaves, that was not directly affected by them. The trade was abolished, and the slaves became more valuable. They were, in general, better treated than free servants precisely because they were property whose value must be maintained. It may well be believed that the slaves were not made to work as hard at the Cape as in countries producing cotton or sugar for export. The farms of this colony produced less for sale, and more for direct consumption, than the West Indian plantations. The slave-owners belonged to families permanently resident in the country, and attached in successive generations to the same slave property; in the older districts to the same landed property also. They were not birds of passage with their eyes on rotten boroughs.

A consciousness that this was so combined with the deeper feeling that slavery necessarily meant the absolute power of the master to produce resentment at government interference with the institution. Regulations, framed in London on the basis of West Indian experience, were applied to the Cape. First came registration, to prevent the re-enslavement of those who had been emancipated and the illegal importation of new slaves. A Protector of Slaves was appointed. Then came regulations concerning punishments and hours of work, forbidding the

separate sale of members of a family, admitting the evidence of baptised slaves in the courts, allowing slaves to hold property. Then the slave was to have the right to his freedom by tendering his appraised price. Finally, a Punishment Record Book was to be kept by every master and the Protector was given access to slave quarters.

These steps, taken between 1816 and 1831, were regarded by slave-owners as seriously encroaching on powers which were essential to the institution. But the institution itself was presently abolished. The Reform Act removed the "West India interest" from Westminster, and made it easier for the very first reformed Parliament to pass the measure for which Wilberforce and his friends had long striven. Unlike the recently despoiled borough-owners, the slave-owners were compensated for their loss. But the compensation allotted to the Cape Colony amounted to little more than a third of the sum at which slave property had been valued locally. It was payable only in London; agents in the colony charged a heavy discount when they bought the claims for cash. The loss was felt more acutely and immediately than it would otherwise have been because of the extent to which slave property had been mortgaged.

When the period of apprenticeship came to an end in 1838 most of the old farm slaves remained in their places as wage labourers, and the distinction between slaves and Hottentots, already blurred in the racial sense, disappeared from the legal, social and economic points of view. The colony knew now only the Europeans and the Coloured People, and these very nearly equal in the eyes of the law.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE BANTU FRONTIER

THE obstacle that stopped the eastward expansion of the Boers during the 1770's was a people with whom close contact was then made for the first time, the Bantu. The name, first applied to them by the philologist Dr. Bleek, described not a race but a group of languages, and is taken from the word which, with slight variations in the many Bantu tongues, means *people*. The speakers of these languages are the dark-skinned Natives of the continent living south of a line running roughly from the Cameroon mountains to Mombasa. At the end of the eighteenth century the southern limit of their territory was marked by the Kalahari desert and an uncertain line which reached the south-east coast in the neighbourhood of the Great Fish River. In this region the land of the Bantu had, before the arrival of the white men, marched with that of the Hottentots.

It is the members of this darker race—to use the term loosely—who alone are called *Natives* in South Africa today. Yet over a large part of the Union they are immigrants of no longer standing than the Europeans. They have moved down slowly from the north, and the stages of their migration in the eastern coastlands can be measured by the reports of travellers, Arab in the Middle Ages and European from the time of da Gama. When the boundary of the Cape Colony was officially advanced in 1775 to the Fish River in its upper reaches and the Bushman's River nearer the coast, the Bantu had reached roughly the same line from the other side.

The Arabs had called the African people *Kaffirs*, infidels, and this name was similarly applied to them by the Europeans. A good deal was known about them even before the two streams of migration had met, as hunters and ship-wrecked crews had made their acquaintance. It was understood that the Kaffirs were a people radically different from the Hottentots. Unlike the latter, they were agriculturists who tilled the soil. Their social and political organisation was much more highly

developed. The future would show that their powers of resistance and survival were of a high order.

They were ruled by hereditary chiefs. Polygyny was practised, but led to no uncertainties about the right of succession. Among the many wives of a chief, one, usually married late in life and for political reasons, held the rank of great wife, and her eldest son had the undisputed right to succeed his father. Next in rank came the wives of the right-hand and of the left-hand house respectively. Their eldest sons were commonly provided with subordinate chieftainships and tribal followings, but recognised the paramountcy of their chief of the great house. The followers of a chief constituted a tribe. Membership of it was normally hereditary, but the subjects of an unpopular chief often threw off their allegiance and attached themselves to another. Inter-tribal disputes about land and cattle were frequent, and often led the defeated party to migrate further south and west, where the feeble Hottentots could be driven out or absorbed. "Man," they said, "begets, but land does not beget."

Among the Bantu cattle played a peculiar part in social, economic and even religious life. All agricultural and domestic work was the province of the women, the handling of cattle was a man's work. Social status depended largely on wealth in cattle, and this could be built up rapidly by those who were successful in raids upon neighbouring tribes. The essential feature of marriage was the payment by the bridegroom to his father-in-law of a number of cattle, the *lobola*. Without this, there was no marriage tie and no children were legitimate. A father, receiving *lobola* cattle for his daughter, could use them to procure a wife for his son. If the son wanted more wives, he must first acquire more cattle. Cattle were sacrificed to the ancestors. More than that, their possession entered in a special way into the Kaffir's emotions. Like money to a capitalist, land to an aristocrat, books and *objets d'art* to a collector, they were the basis of his self-respect.

These points must be mentioned, however briefly, if we are to understand the conflict that now began on the border-line where Boer and Kaffir met. The class of frontier farmers had begun its career by bartering cattle from the Hottentots, in

defiance of prohibitions. Kaffir raids upon the eastern Hottentots for the same purpose were not unusual. When the gap filled by this race was at last closed, strong-armed cattle-rustlers on each side of the border at last met their match.

For three-quarters of a century from this date the relations of the colony with the Kaffirs constituted a problem of foreign, not domestic, politics: border warfare, frontier demarcation, trading across the border, treaties, forts—these were the subject-matter. Like the Crusades, the Kaffir Wars have been given serial numbers for the assistance of schoolboys and others; but the classification is a little artificial, as there were periods of serious friction which have gone down to history unnumbered, and the beginning and end of a "Kaffir War" are not always easy to determine.

No less than the conflict over the treatment of servants, the handling of the frontier problem by successive governments produced resentment among the Boer pioneers. A legend was built up, and enshrined in the pages of the classic historian Theal, that hordes of barbarians were continually breaking over the border, murdering, burning and looting; that the frontiersmen, anxious to defend their homes, were for ever being thwarted by a government determined to see no good in them, and no evil in the "noble savages". In recent times this opinion has been effectively attacked by Professor J. S. Marais for the earlier period and by Professor W. M. Macmillan for the later. Every contribution to a true and unbiassed account of the frontier conflicts is of great value, not only in itself but in its bearing on the race relations of later times.

Who, it may be asked of each of these wars, started the trouble? As robbery and murder were being committed intermittently by both sides, it is hard to give a categorical answer to that question. But certain important relevant facts are known. Much of the old interpretation depended on the assumption that the Zuurveld, the coastlands between the Bushman's and Fish Rivers, was colonial territory which the Kaffirs repeatedly "invaded". It is now clear that this area was occupied (and probably bought from the local Hottentots) by Kaffir tribesmen before the first white pioneers reached it. It follows that every attempt to "clear the Kaffirs out of the

Zuurveld" was an aggression, though not necessarily unprovoked, by the Europeans. This object was said to have been successfully achieved in the first of the wars, though it is known that the Zuurveld was again full of Kaffirs shortly afterwards. While the frontier farmers complained in 1779 of Kaffir raids on their cattle, which forced them to abandon their farms and led to hostilities, it is at least very probable that these raids were only reprisals for others made by the Boers. One consequence of this outbreak was the appointment, already mentioned, of Adriaan van Jaarsveld as Commandant of the eastern frontier in 1780. The following year he began operations by a "trick", namely the shooting of a number of Kaffirs while they were picking up pieces of tobacco that had been thrown to them. In those operations many of the enemy were shot and many of their cattle captured. Thus ended war number one.

The second war, in 1793, was quite certainly initiated by a farmer called Barend Lindeque, who had recently taken up a farm near the mouth of the Fish River. This was in country which the Bantu had occupied before the Europeans. Lindeque organised an unofficial Commando, called in the help of Kaffirs hostile to those of the Zuurveld, and launched an attack. The desertion of one section of the Boers caused the defeat of the others, and this was succeeded by a Kaffir campaign of plunder extending far to the west. There followed a pacification which left the Natives in the disputed area. The farmers had made many complaints, before this war, of losses of cattle and the murder of Hottentot servants. On analysis the losses are found not to be great, and most of them occurred in the Zuurveld; that is to say in the area to which the Kaffirs had a prior claim. Enormous losses were reported during the war itself: as the Landdrost of Graaff-Reinet pointed out, the losses claimed were eight times as large as the same farmers' total wealth in cattle as returned for purposes of taxation.

This Landdrost, H. C. D. Maynier, was very unpopular with the border farmers. Their hatred, vented on him, was in reality directed against certain fundamentals of policy which were common to the old company, the British and the Batavian régime. There were frequent complaints that the Boers were not allowed to pasture their stock beyond the Fish River in



Kaffirland; that they were not allowed when on commando to capture some "little Kaffirs"; that the Kaffirs were not driven out of the Zuurveld; and, of course, that all these governments preferred the interests of Hottentots to those of the farmers. The disaffection led, early in 1795, to a little revolution in Graaff-Reinet. The Landdrost was driven out and a republic proclaimed, with much effusion of French Revolutionary jargon. The British, on taking over the colony, had this insurrection on their hands.

The pacification of Graaff-Reinet which followed was only temporary. A new rising was provoked by the arrest of Adriaan van Jaarsveld for forging the date on a receipt. As this rebellion was being put down by troops from the Cape, the Kaffirs of the Zuurveld became alarmed for their safety, and it was they who started the conflict of 1799. The danger to the colonists was very greatly increased by the support which rebellious Hottentots, using firearms, gave to their enemies. The government made peace without victory; the British occupation was temporary and a large expenditure not justified.

Such were the first three Kaffir Wars, which illustrate clearly enough the turbulence of the eastern border. They were fought in the eighteenth century, before the influence of the London Missionary Society was felt in the colony. Something of the missionary spirit, however—or rather of the spirit of enlightened eighteenth-century Europe—inspired such officials as Maynier, and it was this that provoked the hostility and indignation of the frontier malcontents.

The Native wars that began after the final conquest of the Cape by Great Britain filled the greater part of the nineteenth century. The endless chronicle of border forays, cattle-lifting, murder of white men and Hottentots, shooting down of Kaffirs and driving off their stock, and in the background the treaties, the "policies" and the conflict between frontiersmen and Whitehall, is not easily intelligible to the casual reader of Theal or Cory. It can be made more so by concentrating on certain general features of the struggle.

The first feature to note is the constriction of the Bantu territory. A steady expansion to the south had been a condition on which the preservation of the old Bantu society had

depended, just as expansion to the north and east had been necessary to a people with the social and economic traditions of the Boers. The Boers found means to continue their trekking, but in doing so they put a stop to Native expansion and, indeed, turned the foremost Kaffir ranks about and drove them back upon the others following behind. The congestion which resulted could lead only to war or to a revolution in the Kaffir mode of life. Both these consequences followed in turn.

Both were inevitable. The mere halting of the Bantu advance, not to speak of its reversal, produced a tension of which raids on the colonists' cattle and attempts to drive them "into the sea" were symptoms. If these deeds were successfully punished, the colonial government could not always resist the demand for annexation of territory and its opening to white settlement. The governments of the trekker Republics made no attempt to resist it. This conceded, the tension in Kaffirland increased and led to fiercer conflict than before.

In the early decades of the century the importance of this tension was difficult to appreciate because the white men experienced Kaffir pressure on one side only, the Fish River frontier. Beyond lay the whole immensity of Africa—surely large enough for any number of savages? But when the Trekkers moved out of the colony in a body in the 'thirties, and new states were set up in the north, it was possible to watch the effect of any outside impact on all the tribes from the Fish to the Limpopo.

This is the second feature of the struggle to be observed. When South Africa was divided into several colonies and republics, the dealings of any of them with the tribes on its borders produced repercussions all over the sub-continent. This became an argument for uniting or federating them and devising a "common Native policy"; but it led also to unpopular moves by the British government, and further complicated the relations of British and Afrikaner colonists.

Thirdly, the long frontier struggles produced in the white people an attitude of mind that was out of date almost from its first appearance, yet has survived with great vitality to the present day. Even in the eighteenth century a few of the Bantu had entered the service of colonial farmers. Thereafter the

break-up of tribes in Native quarrels and the increasing congestion of Kaffirland led more and more to do so, even in the old colony. In Natal and the Republics they were the regular labour force. Yet the Europeans who employed them thought of the Bantu not as an element of their own society but as an enemy on the other side of a border-line. All, it was thought, with the exception of those whose labour was needed, should be driven over that line. These habits of thought, with the contradictions they involve, persist in the twentieth century under conditions which will be described later.

The fourth Kaffir War of 1811-12 served to drive the Bantu out of the territory west of the Fish River, an object long desired but never before attained. It should be remembered that this achievement came in the same year as the Black Circuit and the second (Cradock's) Hottentot ordinance; from the colonists' point of view a rather mixed bag of blessings. For the first time the westward movement of the Bantu was actually reversed. The result was significant. The Fish River had served to divide the followers of Gaika from those of Ndlambe. Gaika was a paramount chief, Ndlambe an uncle who had been regent during his minority. The regent had captured the loyalty of many of the tribesmen, and when the hereditary chief asserted his rights the tribe was split. Ndlambe crossed the Fish River to the west, but now the white men drove him back. In 1818 the two chiefs fought it out in the great battle of Amalinde, a complete victory for Ndlambe. Gaika called on the colony for help, on the strength of a friendly agreement recently made with the Governor. The call was answered by the war of 1819.

The settlement of 1812 had excluded the Kaffirs from the land west of the Fish; that of 1819 removed them, in theory, from the "Neutral Territory" between the Fish and the Keiskamma, intended as a buffer between the races; after the war of 1835 British rule was extended to the Kei, but this was the Governor's own policy and was disavowed by the Colonial Office. The empty "Neutral" belt was, almost immediately, being described as the "Ceded" Territory, and in a short time Kaffirs drifted back into it from one side and colonists were brought into it from the other. That the British government

permitted the settlement of English and Hottentots there, but not at first Boers, was naturally a sore point with the latter. They had great hopes of farms beyond the Keiskamma in 1835, but these were dashed when Glenelg, then at the Colonial Office, insisted on the abandonment of the annexed territory.

The pressure on both sides was so great as to make a farce of the policy which the British Governors had taken over from their Dutch predecessors, the policy of strict separation of the races. In the seventeenth century the colonists had been forbidden to trade with Hottentots, even to admit them into their houses. Now there were similar attempts to forbid intercourse with the Bantu. At a fort in the neutral zone a fair was established at which trade was conducted. It was lucrative, and in due course the restriction to this one controlled mart was abandoned. Kaffirs crossed the border to work on the farms. The farmers, too, crossed the border—on patrols pursuing stolen cattle.

This pursuit of stolen cattle was one of the thorniest of the frontier difficulties. Could the spoor be followed to the first Native kraal, and that kraal made responsible for the loss? Or was it innocent if the tracks could be shown to lead further? Could only the animals actually stolen be taken back? As to the number stolen, could the farmer's word be believed without supporting evidence? If there were to be a proper check on the frontiersman's rough and ready methods of justice, it might be better to allow pursuit only while the stolen cattle were still in sight; or perhaps to entrust the work to the regular troops and forbid it to the aggrieved civilians.

On all these points official policy was frequently changed. Complaints poured in from the colonists, that the restrictions prevented them from recovering their property; from the Kaffirs, that the lack of restrictions exposed innocent kraals to summary spoliation at all times.

This argument proceeded, and these changes of policy occurred, at a time when the Natives on the eastern border of the colony were being subjected to exceptionally severe pressure from behind. It was occasioned by the rise of the "Black Napoleon", Shaka. The illegitimate son of a petty chief, he had been brought up at the kraal of Dingiswayo, the paramount

chief of a number of tribes in what is now Zululand. At his father's death Shaka was able with Dingiswayo's help to succeed him as chief of the insignificant Zulu tribe. When Dingiswayo was killed, in 1818, Shaka began his career of despotism and conquest. Friendly tribes were absorbed into the Zulu nation; enemies in all directions were exterminated.

It will be remembered that this year 1818 was one of inter-tribal war on the Cape frontier, followed by hostilities with the colony itself. These had been caused mainly by the pressure on the Kaffirs from the west. But from that moment the border tribes found themselves between two fires. Remnants of the broken peoples of Natal, fleeing before the Zulus, attacked others further to the south. This movement was the groundswell behind the waves that constantly beat on the colonial frontier. In Natal, south of the Tugela, the only remaining inhabitants hid in inaccessible places. Some became cannibals.

The sharp point of the Zulu stabbing-spear was felt not only to the south, but to the north and west of Zululand as well. Tribes fleeing from the wrath of Shaka, if they were blessed with competent leadership, became in their turn a terror to those still further afield. In this way the Bantu of the inland plains were decimated, their tribes broken up, and the lucky ones found refuge among the natural defences of the Drakensberg. Here they were organised into a new people, the Basuto, by the self-made chief Moshesh. The followers of a fierce chieftainess, Ma Ntatisi, known therefore as the Mantatis, preferred aggression to security. They swept like Huns across the High Veld, only to meet their Châlons at a place called Lithako; there they were broken up by a party of the half-breed Griquas, who had guns and horses.

The Mantatis were defeated in 1823. At the same time the High Veld submitted to the even greater scourge of the Matabele, the followers of a Zulu general, Umsilikazi (or Moselekatse, as the Basuto called him) escaping from the anger of his master. The Matabele settled in what is now the western Transvaal, and like their kinsmen in Zululand made a wide belt of "scorched earth" all round them.

The extent of all this slaughter has never been exactly measured, though wild guesses have been made. But the

migrations of tribes have been observed. There is no doubt that the Tembus pressed upon the Cape frontier north of the Amatolas because they were propelled forward by the disturbances in Natal; nor that the disorganised refugees called Fingos, and ultimately given asylum in the colony, were the remains of tribes broken up in the same process. When the Voortrekkers entered what are now the northern Free State, southern Transvaal and Natal, they found these areas very thinly peopled by Natives. To what extent the emptiness of the country was due to Shaka's wars is another of the unsolved riddles.

In Shaka's lifetime—he was murdered and succeeded by his brother Dingaan in 1828—there were at least empty spaces to take the shock of the Zulu explosions. But then the reconnaissance patrols of the Great Trek discovered these deserted lands, and beckoned to the main body of the trekkers to come on and take them. The story of the Trek will be told in the next chapter, but it will be necessary to anticipate it a little in order to follow the history of the frontier to its conclusion. It must be borne in mind, then, that emigrants from the Cape Colony set up in the interior various unstable republics with ill-defined boundaries. One area, Natal, was ultimately annexed by Britain. In another, which later became the Orange Free State, British sovereignty was maintained for a time. Britain's withdrawal from it was due mainly to the difficulty and expense of defending its frontier against the Basuto.

The Trekkers entered this area in some force in 1836. The "Boer with his roer"—his old muzzle-loader—meant security from the old attacks, so the Basuto came down from their cramped quarters in the mountains to sow and reap their crops on the plains. Timid fugitives came out of their hiding-places in Natal, others poured across the boundary rivers to the safety of the white man's land. The Boers were glad enough to have a labouring population for their farms, but the expansion of tribal territories into the land claimed by the republics was another matter.

The republicans in Natal decided to allow five Native families on every white man's farm, and to keep all other Natives at arm's length. On the frontiers the old colonial story of cattle-lifting and infiltration was repeated, and in 1840 a

commando went forth to punish the Baca tribe on the southern border of Natal. The Bacas were defeated and a number of "orphans" brought back as "apprentices". The attack on a tribe in that locality was an almost direct threat to the security of the Cape frontier, and the taking of apprentices touched the Colonial Office on one of its few raw spots. These events, then, led a reluctant British government to annex Natal to the Empire, as will be seen in the next chapter. They led also to the final development of a Cape policy which had been devised ten years earlier.

Even before the Trek the disturbances caused by Europeans as well as Natives beyond the colonial border were a ticklish problem for a government that was almost irrevocably determined not to push that border any further forward. At the end of 1834, therefore, a treaty was signed with the Griqua chief Waterboer (ruling the country north of the Orange near its junction with the Vaal), by which he agreed to keep order in his territory, to protect that sector of the colonial frontier, to assist the colony in the pursuit of criminals and bandits taking refuge in his country. In return he was given a salary and promised a supply of arms and ammunition. After the war of 1835 other treaties were made with many of the chiefs on the eastern frontier. After the expedition of the Natal Boers against their southern neighbours the Cape made a treaty with the Pondo chief Faku, recognising his authority over lands in which his writ had never run. And to another treaty Moshesh the Basuto chief put his mark.

The Basuto, however, were neighbours of the Trekkers in what became the Free State. On that border the old story of the Cape frontier was re-enacted, with the additional complication that the disturbances of the Cape and those of the Free State now had mutual repercussions. The Bantu of the old eastern frontier, the AmaXhosa, were in an explosive condition after being checked in the west by the colony. A trivial incident was enough to produce the war of 1846-7 (the Seventh), which broke out at a time when the British authorities were having difficulties with the Trekkers north of the Orange, and when those of Natal were leaving that colony because the Union Jack now flew there.

The peace of 1847 involved the annexation of the old neutral territory to the colony, and that of the country between Keiskamma and Kei to the Empire as the province of British Kaffraria. Apart from troops, officials and a handful of other Europeans this territory was inhabited entirely by Natives, who had undertaken in 1847 to obey such rules as Sir Harry Smith imposed on them. Among other barbarities that they were expected to abandon were the punishment of people guilty of witchcraft and "the sin of buying wives". Bantu society was not ready for such revolutionary changes.

The restive chiefs of British Kaffraria, backed by a witch-doctor called Umlanjeni, prepared to strike once again at the white man. When they did so the repercussions were felt over the whole of South Africa. The frontier colonists expected trouble, and induced Sir Harry Smith to come east and see for himself. The Governor summoned the chiefs of the new province to meet him at Kingwilliamstown in October, 1850. Most of the important ones failed to appear, so Sandile, the principal offender, was deposed and a well qualified European appointed in his place. A small military force which was sent in December to seek out the deposed chiefs was ambushed at the Boomah Pass; on Christmas Eve the frontier villages of military settlers were overwhelmed, the colony invaded and the Eighth Kaffir War begun.

The war was complicated by the desertion of an important section of the Hottentots to the enemy. As usual, the operations of the British forces were inconclusive because of the crudeness of the Kaffir economic and political organisation. There was no capital, no nerve-centre or depot whose capture would paralyse the enemy. Forests, kloofs and mountain fastnesses were scoured, few Kaffirs seen, yet when the troops had passed the barbarians returned to their old haunts and continued as before. When Sir George Cathcart succeeded Sir Harry Smith in 1852 he introduced new methods which soon proved effective. Small and cheap defensive works were built in large numbers to hold the country that had been cleared. The colonists were told that if they did not turn out on commando in full force the regular troops might be withdrawn. Early in 1853 the last of the rebel chiefs submitted. More land, to the north of British Kaffraria,



was annexed to the colony, and much in both territories was in due course opened up to white settlement.

The operations against the Kaffirs had extended as far as the Orange River, so that the Basuto chief Moshesh was brought into contact with the disturbance. He had, in any case, regular feuds with many of his neighbours, and these were now conducted more fiercely than before. The early successes of the Kaffirs against the Colony in 1851 stimulated the restless ambition of chiefs from the Keiskamma to the Limpopo. Cattle-lifting and border disputes between Moshesh and his northern and western neighbours were intensified.

The British Resident in Bloemfontein assumed the responsibility of keeping order among these quarrelling tribes. A small force, with Native auxiliaries, was sent to the assistance of one chief against another. Moshesh intervened and won a complete victory at Viervoet in June, 1851. The British Resident had to retire from the contest, and the news of the famous victory spread southwards to Kaffraria and northwards to the Transvaal. In that turbulent land, whose independence had just been recognised by the British, two little campaigns were fought in August, 1852. One was against the Bapedi of Sekukuniland, who were besieged on a hill fortress and reduced by thirst. The other was directed against the Bakwena on the western border. The republican pretext—an afterthought—was that the Bakwena had given shelter to a fugitive chief whose followers had since the news of the Basuto success become troublesome cattle lifters, and who had fled when summoned to appear before the nearest court. Actually the desire for land and labour inspired the attack. The Bakwena were defeated and the vacant house of their missionary, Dr. Livingstone, found to have been broken open and pillaged. Livingstone believed, possibly with some justification, that the Boers had done this, and through him the little expedition received wide and one-sided publicity in England.

The peace of 1853 was therefore a precarious one. At every point where the white man's land marched with the black man's there was tension and fear. How much longer would this dreary story continue? By a strange chance which could not be foreseen, it had already ended for the Cape Colony. The

AmaXhosa, not yet effectively subdued by their enemies, became the victims of their own superstition.

During 1856 the Natives of British Kaffraria and their kinsmen beyond the Kei were seized with an almost unaccountable madness. The story circulated that a young girl called Nongquase, when drawing water from a stream, had spoken with the spirits of the dead. Her uncle, who claimed to be something of an expert in such matters, then went to the stream and established contact with the ghostly visitors himself. Through him they gave their orders to the chiefs and people at large. The people were to kill and eat their cattle, consume all their crops; in short, to eat or destroy everything edible in their possession. Then, on a certain day—finally fixed at February 18, 1857—the miracle would occur. Two blood-red suns would rise—or alternatively one sun which would circle about in the sky and then set in the east. A great hurricane would drive the white men, and the unbelieving black men, into the sea. Fields of ripe grain, herds of beautiful cattle, would miraculously appear. The deluded people actually made skin bags to receive the abundance of milk that was expected, and strengthened the props of their huts against the violence of the storm.

The colonial government tried in vain to stop the destruction. Defensive measures were therefore taken on the frontier, and stores of food collected. When the great day came, and no miracle, the spirit of the AmaXhosa was broken. The depth of the disillusionment was in proportion to the extravagance of the hope and excitement. Many made no effort at all, but sat down in groups to die. Some became cannibals. Others, emaciated and submissive, poured into the colony to beg for food and work.

British Kaffraria lost about two-thirds of its population. Some clans ceased to exist as effective units. Though one more Kaffir War was to come, twenty years later, the border disturbances of the old kind were over and race relations entered a new phase.

What lay behind this hallucination? It was generally believed that the whole thing was a device of the Paramount Chief Krelu, perhaps instigated by Moshesh, to goad his people to a desperate onslaught upon the colony. If so it was badly mismanaged; it is known in history as "the suicide of the AmaXhosa".

## CHAPTER V

### THE GREAT TREK

LONG before the seventh and eighth Kaffir Wars the aspect of South African affairs had been profoundly changed by the Great Trek, "the central event in the history of European man in southern Africa".

The story of the Trek has been so thickly overlaid with the interpretations which later generations have given it in the light of their own experiences that there is some difficulty in seeing it as it appeared to contemporaries. On the one hand it has been regarded as the birth-struggle of a nation; on the other, by a natural reaction, as a mere continuation, on a larger scale, of the old frontier trekking in search of more and better land.

Neither of these explanations is adequate. As appeared later in the lands immediately north of the Orange River, there was a sharp distinction between the Voortrekkers and the older type of border expansionists who had for generations been moving further and further out and dragging the colonial frontier after them. The Voortrekkers deliberately left the frontier behind. Their motives were political, social, ideological if you like; and of course economic motives were inextricably interwoven with these. But from the short term point of view the trek meant, for many, economic loss and not gain. On the other hand the picture of an oppressed nationality struggling to be free has been overdrawn. The factors that go to the making of a nation were present, but they had to operate for a long time yet before producing a recognisable result.

The farmers of the eastern frontier had a sense of grievance and of frustration. Their position may be summed up by saying that, during the eighteenth century, they had evolved a pattern of life in which their ideas, tastes, economic needs and practical abilities were integrated and harmonised; and that in the nineteenth century the survival of this way of life was endangered by the impact of the outside world. By far the most important shock was that administered to the old ideas on how

to deal with Hottentots, Slaves and Kaffirs. The Black Circuit and the Slagter's Nek episode had been dramatic illustrations of the passing of the old order; the fiftieth ordinance of 1828 completed the process. Hottentots could no longer be kept in their places. In 1834 slavery was abolished and the owners insufficiently compensated. The frontiersmen were not slave-owners to any great extent, and were not much affected materially by the emancipation. They objected to it as a sign of the times and as a part of the whole social revolution which was destroying their world. They complained also that the government would not protect them against the depredations of the Kaffirs.

These complaints were not all the reflection of political principles. Many people were conscious of practical grievances without concerning themselves overmuch with politics. If a man were summoned to a distant court to defend himself on a frivolous charge, he might have to leave his wife and small children unprotected on a dangerous frontier. His natural reaction was to demand that the government should keep the Kaffirs at bay and not listen to Hottentots, but he might well be open to political conviction if only he were given security.

To most of the Voortrekkers, however, it was a matter of principle. Anna Steenkamp, in giving reasons for the emigration, said that it was not so much "their freedom that drove us to such lengths, as their being placed on an equal footing with Christians, contrary to the laws of God and the natural distinction of race and religion, so that it was intolerable for any decent Christian to bow down beneath such a yoke; wherefore we rather withdrew in order to preserve our doctrines in purity". Piet Retief, in a manifesto published in Grahamstown, asserted that "whilst we will take care that no one is brought by us into a condition of slavery, we will establish such regulations as may suppress crime and preserve proper relations between master and servant". Another of Retief's points reflected a widely felt grievance: "We complain of the unjustifiable odium which has been cast upon us by interested and dishonest persons, under the name of religion, whose testimony is believed in England to the exclusion of all evidence in our favour."

In addition to these there was another set of causes that increased the discontent, but would hardly by themselves have provoked the Trek. The colony was being anglicised in various ways. Between 1823 and 1828 English completely ousted Dutch as the official language. In 1828 the old courts were abolished, and although the new ones were technically an improvement they had no popular element like the old heemraden. In 1813 came a change in the land system. No more loan places were to be granted, but farms on perpetual quit-rent tenure, the rent varying with the value of the land and being much higher than the old recognition money. Some pressure was applied to the existing landholders to convert their tenures to the new system, and to pay the cost of a survey. It was hoped that farms that could be divided among heirs, together with the abolition of the old free access to land, might discourage the *Wanderlust* and cause families to strike roots in the soil.

Instead, the reform became a grievance—a birthright of the people had been taken away. In 1832 there was something worse. The shadow of Gibbon Wakefield fell across the colony: no more land to be granted except by auction sale after upset price and quitrent had been fixed. Though this instruction seems not to have been carried out, the threat was alarming.

It is difficult to assess the relative importance of these factors. It may well be that, taken together, they gave the frontiersman a vague feeling that he no longer "belonged"; that he was being surrounded by an alien environment and could not freely be himself. This feeling was not expressed by the trekkers who left accounts of their motives; they dealt with specific grievances, but their position at the time and their later history suggest that the general one may have been important.

By 1834 the idea of departing from the colony and severing their connection with it had been formulated and was widely supported by the eastern farmers. The matter was discussed in one farmhouse after another as visitors gathered for social occasions. Nothing was said in public, as it was feared the government might put obstacles in the way. One obstacle could certainly be foreseen—a prohibition of the export of powder and lead, and large quantities of these would be needed if the venture was to be a success. Supplies were therefore accu-

mulated and hidden, and the large amounts so collected give some indication of how long the plan had been maturing.

The last straw, or rather straws, were provided by the British government's veto of the vagrancy law of 1834 and its reversal in 1836 of D'Urban's annexation of the province between Keiskamma and Kei. That annexation had given rise to hopes of land, and with other aspects of D'Urban's policy had suggested that a firm way with Kaffirs might be expected of the government. When those hopes were dashed the emigration began to assume large proportions, but the first parties of trekkers had already departed by then. While the War of 1835 was being fought some scouting parties, *commissie treks*, were spying out the land in various directions. Shaka had laid it waste, Dingaan had succeeded him, and Natal and the inland plains were found to be nearly empty of people.

In the same year the first important parties of emigrants, those of Louis Trigardt and "Lang Hans" van Rensburg, crossed the Orange River. In the course of the next three years they were followed by many others, some in large parties under recognised leaders, others going as individual families—in the patriarchal sense of the word. The emigration from the old colony did not end in 1838 or at any other time, but only the pioneers are counted as Voortrekkers. They may have numbered about 12,000. They came in great majority from the eastern frontier districts such as Graaff-Reinet and Uitenhage.

Over the plains beyond the Orange the processions of tented ox-wagons moved slowly northward. The men and boys rode on horseback. Sometimes Hottentot or Kaffir servants drove the flocks and herds along with the party; commonly the white children had to do this, for few servants trekked with their masters. The plains were full of game, which were hunted and shot for food. Every now and then the company would stop at a place where the grazing was good and camp for days or weeks to rest the animals. There the children played with their toy wagons and clay oxen, which trekked and outspanned after the manner of the big ones. Clothes were washed, wagons mended, game brought in by the hunters, the children taught, religious services held; and then the trek was resumed.

Between the Orange and Modder rivers lay territory

occupied, though sparsely, by a branch of the Griquas which was shortly to recognise Adam Kok III as its chief. In the same area were farmers from the northern districts of the colony—not Voortrekkers but migrants of the old type who had no quarrel with their government. The trekkers therefore passed over these lands, crossed the Modder, and foregathered at an isolated mountain beyond it called Thaba 'Nchu. This became the rendezvous at which large numbers collected in the course of 1836.

The parties of Trigardt and Van Rensburg were not there. They had crossed the Vaal, given the Matabele a wide berth, and advanced over highveld and bushveld to the distant Zoutpansberg. The Van Rensburg party pushed on to the Limpopo, where all were murdered by Natives. Trigardt remained a long time in the Zoutpansberg, hoping to renew contact with his friends from the south. A. H. Potgieter had visited him and promised to return. For good reasons, to be mentioned presently, Potgieter and others failed to appear. Trigardt then decided that communication with the Portuguese at Delagoa Bay was essential to the survival of his party. A letter was sent to the Governor, who could not read it; but he invited the trekkers to come down to him.

The journey was one that taxed the strength even of those tough pioneers to the limit. Over the mountains where the Olifants River breaks through to the lowveld the wagons had to be tobogganed with their wheels removed. Cattle died. Lions had to be warded off. In the lowveld the people were stricken by malaria. At Delagoa Bay Trigardt's wife, then the leader himself and many others died of it. A small remnant of the party took ship for Natal and there joined their friends.

As Trigardt had been moving northwards to the Zoutpansberg he was followed by the party under Potgieter, a leader who was destined ultimately to be more successful in the region which Trigardt abandoned. Makwana, a Bataung chief, welcomed these newcomers as likely to give him protection against the Matabele. In return for that protection and a gift of cattle he ceded to Potgieter the whole of the land between the Vet and Vaal rivers, reserving only a small area for his tribe. The main body of the party remained in this tract while their leader and a few others went northward to visit Trigardt. On

his return, after promising to make contact with the latter again, Potgieter found that some small bands of his followers had been killed by the Matabele.

The trekkers now (in October, 1836) used what were to become their standard methods of defence against the Natives. Their wagons were drawn up in a circle or *laager* on a hill afterwards called Vegkop. Three thousand Matabele attacked this camp, which was defended successfully by forty men and boys. They had firearms, but it has been reasonably suggested that the difference in effect between an assegai and one of those muzzle-loading *roers* was less than between the latter and a modern rifle. The camp was saved, but all the cattle were driven off by the enemy and the defenders became immobile. Their friends at Thaba 'Nchu were informed, cattle were sent to Vegkop and the party was brought back to the rendezvous.

Another important band of trekkers had then reached Thaba 'Nchu, led by the prosperous—almost dandy—wagon-maker of Graaff-Reinet, Gert Maritz. When the whole population of the camps assembled at the end of 1836 to adopt a form of government and to choose leaders, the offices of Chairman of the Volksraad (people's council) and Landdrost of the court were given to Maritz, while Potgieter became Commandant and Chairman of the Council of War. Potgieter and his followers regarded this as a snub. The seeds of dissension had been sown.

The seeds were watered when, four months later, a further political development at Thaba 'Nchu followed the arrival of the greatest of the trekkers, Piet Retief. Retief was chosen "Governor", Maritz Landdrost, and Potgieter nothing at all. From that time Potgieter went his own way. Early in 1837 he had led an expedition against the Matabele of the western Transvaal—their headquarters were in the present district of Marico—had punished them severely and had captured many cattle. In October he repeated this exploit, defeating the enemy so effectively in a nine days' battle that the Matabele left the country, wandered in the wilderness for a few years and then settled beyond the Limpopo in what is now Matabeleland. Potgieter, who had purchased the land between the Vet and Vaal rivers from Makwana, could now claim to hold by right of conquest the whole area which Umsilikazi had dominated by



terror. He settled down in it with his followers and founded the town of Potchefstroom. Some of his party remained at Winburg, a village they had built in the Vet-Vaal territory in 1837.

The main body of the emigrants, who had elected Retief and Maritz, had no taste for Potgieter's kingdom. Their hearts were set on Natal, the future Garden Colony, the land described by scouting parties as flowing with milk and honey and, by grace of Shaka and Dingaan, empty of people. Moving slowly, towards the Drakensberg passes they camped near the edge of the plateau at Blyde Vooruitzicht—Happy Prospect. Retief took a small party down to the coast and up to Zululand, where Dingaan received them and undertook to grant Natal to them if they would first recover some cattle taken from him by the Batlokua chief Sikonyela. It had been said that white men had taken the cattle, and they must prove their innocence and good faith by bringing them back. In due course Retief returned with the cattle to Dingaan's kraal and received the land grant in writing, while the bulk of his followers descended the mountain passes into Natal. Retief and his company numbered sixty-seven Europeans and about thirty Hottentots. On February 6, 1838, they were entertained in the royal kraal before taking their leave. At a command from Dingaan his warriors seized them all, dragged them to a neighbouring hillock and clubbed them to death.

Many reasons can be given for this massacre. The chief had complained that though the cattle taken from Sikonyela had been returned to him, the guns and horses had not. When it was pointed out that these had been the white men's and not Zulu property in the first instance, he let this pass. More important were two factors of a superstitious kind. When Dingaan had murdered his brother Shaka, the latter had taunted him with a prophecy: it will not be you, he said, but the white men who will rule over the land. This had weighed on the assassin's mind. And after Potgieter's victory over the Matabele, Retief had pointed the moral to Dingaan: "thus God punishes wicked tyrants". Zulu tradition adds another and very curious factor. About two years before Retief first visited Dingaan the latter's kraal had been reached by Piet Uys of the *commissie trek* to Natal. Asked his name, he gave it as Piet. Retief, in

answer to a similar question, said *his* name was Piet. Was he the only Piet in command of the Voortrekkers? He was. On the first occasion he was a tall man with a rough voice and a large black beard. Now he was a short man with a soft voice and a brownish beard. Verily, these men were magicians! It may be that the witch-doctors developed such thoughts in the chief's mind. On the fatal day the command he gave to his warriors was "Kill the wizards!"

No sooner was this deed done than the *impis* set out to destroy the rest of the emigrants, who were scattered along various rivers in the neighbourhood of the present Estcourt, Weenen and Colenso. The most advanced parties were surprised and overwhelmed at night. Those further back formed *laagers* in time and warded off the attack. The Zulus retired, but the outlook for the trekkers was bleak.

Help came from their friends beyond the Drakensberg, but an expedition which Uys and Potgieter led against the Zulus was a failure. Uys was killed, Potgieter returned home over the mountains, and the remaining leader in Natal, Maritz, died. Then the *deus ex machina* appeared—Andries Pretorius, the last great trekker leader to leave the old colony. He put heart into the people, made careful plans and led a strong force into Zululand. It formed a *laager* beside a river, soon to become the Blood River, and was attacked by the whole might of the Zulus on December 16, 1838. The enemy was beaten off with disastrous losses. Dingaan was not destroyed, but this event was the culmination of the Trek. The Zulu military power was broken for a generation. It was on December 16, 1938, that the centenary celebrations reached their climax.<sup>1</sup>

There were more expeditions against Dingaan; many of his own people turned against him, he was driven out as a fugitive and finally done to death in Swaziland. The Voortrekkers could at last settle down in Natal and establish a republic. Pietermaritzburg was founded. In accordance with a vow made before Blood River, the Church of the Vow was built at that place, and December 16 was ordered to be solemnly commemorated every year. Then the trekkers ran into another obstacle—their old enemies the British

<sup>1</sup>See p. 190.

The British had in fact reached Natal before the trekkers. A handful of adventurers had settled at Port Natal in 1824 and, thanks to some effective medical attention to Shaka, had received from him a part of the same land that Dingaan was afterwards to grant to Retief. There were no white women in this party. Some of the Englishmen "went Native" and gathered under their sway clans of refugees from the Zulu despotism. From time to time they requested that the territory should be annexed by Great Britain. In 1835 they planned a town which they called D'Urban after the Cape Governor, and the missionary ex-naval officer Allen Gardiner was appointed magistrate there by the Cape authorities. Still the British government refused to annex Natal; it was firmly resolved not to extend its commitments in that part of the world.

When Retief came down on his first visit to Dingaan he went to D'Urban and was well received by the inhabitants, who welcomed the prospect of reinforcements to defend them against the Zulus.

The British government, however, gathered from missionary reports coming in after Blood River that a harmless Native population was threatened with extermination or enslavement by aggressive Boers. When these Boers established their headquarters at Pietermaritzburg and set up their Republic of Natalia, their contact with the outside world through Port Natal and the facility with which they could import arms and ammunition began to look sinister in Whitehall. Possessing a port, they might admit foreign Powers to South Africa. A hostile naval base would directly threaten the Cape and the Indian Ocean. The merchants of the Cape, moreover, had counted on monopolising the trade with the trekkers, and the government of the colony on monopolising the customs duties. So the situation in Natal gave rise to protests.

From the end of 1838 to the end of 1839 a small British force was stationed at Durban—to use the modern spelling—for the purpose of closing the harbour except to trade under licence from the Cape government. As there was still no intention to annex the country, this force was then withdrawn. Not long afterwards the Republic made the serious blunder, already referred to, of attacking the Baca tribe to the south and carrying

off "apprentices". The direct consequence of this action was the arrival of British troops at Durban in May, 1842. The Republic was to be discouraged from further adventures that might disturb the tribes on the colonial border. The Boers regarded this as an invasion of their country. The British authorities took the view that the trekkers were still what they had always been, British subjects, and could not change their status by migrating into the wilds: *nemo potest exuere patriam*. Hostility to the British troops would, on this view, be rebellion.

However that might be, hostilities broke out. The British troops, in a camp protected by simple earthworks, were besieged by the Boers for a month. When the siege began a local resident, Dick King, was ferried with his horse and Native servant across the bay, and then rode the 600 miles to Grahamstown in ten days to call for help. The romantic exploit of this Paul Revere of South African history barely succeeded in its object. When the besieged force was very near the end of its resources, the firing of rockets and the booming of guns at sea heralded the arrival of two ships with reinforcements. The bar was forced, troops landed and the Boers driven away.

Great Britain thus found herself more deeply committed to operations in Natal than she had intended or foreseen. Negotiations at Pietermaritzburg revealed divisions among the trekkers. The agent of the Cape government was cornered by a crowd of angry women and for two hours given a piece of their mind. Some of the Boers from beyond the Drakensberg came down to defend their rights. But when they found that the Commissioner was not interested in their part of the country they went home, and the men in authority at Pietermaritzburg finally but reluctantly accepted the British terms. Natal thus became a British possession in 1843 and two years later was organised as a dependency of the Cape.

A few of the Boers were content with this arrangement, and settled down on their farms, mostly in the northern parts of the new colony. The majority was of a different opinion. The British authorities, they complained, were allowing tens of thousands of Natives to pour into the colony and squat on land, much of which the Boers claimed as their farms. Full-sized claims were not recognised unless there had been *bona fide*

occupation for twelve months. How could farms have been occupied at that time, when the men had been fighting and the countryside was unsafe? The new régime, moreover, insisted on making no distinction between black and white in the eyes of the law. It was to establish just such distinctions that the pioneers had trekked. So there was nothing to do but go back over the Drakensberg, to join their friends in the Winburg-Potchefstroom area. And this after the martyrdom of Retief, the massacre of Weenen and the victory of Blood River!

Early in 1848 Sir Harry Smith, the new Governor of the Cape, who had just brought the seventh Kaffir War to an end, arrived in the country below the Drakensberg where some of the trekkers were tarrying on their way out of Natal. In addition to the governorship he held the new office of High Commissioner for South Africa, which enabled him to represent the British government outside the colony itself. He visited this band of trekkers with the object of persuading them to stay where they were. He had known these Boers when he and they had fought together against the Kaffirs thirteen years earlier. He had got on well with them and they had trusted him. But even his personal influence could not now persuade them to remain in Natal. As they went their way, Sir Harry issued a proclamation annexing the territory between the Orange and the Vaal—the Orange River Sovereignty—to the Crown.

Many of the trekkers received this news very bitterly. After all their sufferings and hard-won victories they found Britain coming after them to snatch the rewards out of their hands. First Natal, now the Sovereignty—and this included the land which Potgieter had fairly bought from Makwana. Sir Harry Smith was an impulsive and over-confident man. He believed the majority of the Boers trusted him and would support his action. From the legal point of view they were all British subjects; if they owed allegiance to the Crown it was better that they should get some protection and effective government in return for that allegiance. And the Cape Colony could not afford to have its frontiers perpetually endangered by the Native wars in which the trekkers got themselves involved. The British government reluctantly consented to the annexation of the Sovereignty on the understanding that it was necessary to

prevent disorder and bloodshed, that the people of the territory wanted it, and that it would reduce the burden on the Treasury.

Sir Harry had been hasty, but it was not his fault that he was not justified by the sequel. True, to judge by the signatures to petitions, some three-quarters of the Boers in the Sovereignty were opposed to the annexation, but this opposition could be expected to diminish. A substantial minority welcomed a government which promised greater efficiency and better amenities than could, as yet, be provided by themselves. And the ranks of the majority began to thin when malcontents in the Winburg district began a new trek over the Vaal. Those abandoning Natal moved in the same direction. All that were most irreconcilably anti-British were gathered into the cave of Adullam that was to be the Transvaal.

Pretorius, who was now in that country, could not accept the loss of the Sovereignty as final. He had a grudge against the Cape Governor for annexing the territory, since Sir Harry had asked him to ascertain the views of the people, and, as he understood the arrangement, there was to be no annexation until their views were known. From the meetings held in various places by Pretorius, as well as from the petitions presented, it was evident that the Boers were hostile. Yet the annexation had been proclaimed without waiting for the results of this investigation.

Pretorius therefore brought a commando across the Vaal, gathered support as he advanced through the Sovereignty, chased the British Resident from Bloemfontein and meant to establish the independence of all the Boers north of the Orange River. This scheme was frustrated by Sir Harry Smith at the "severe skirmish" of Boomplaats. Pretorius left the Sovereignty with a price on his head, followed by large numbers of the die-hards. Their places were taken by new immigrants, of the opposite political persuasion, from the Cape Colony.

The difference in political character between the lands north and south of the Vaal was further accentuated at the beginning of 1852 by the action of two special Commissioners sent to the Sovereignty by the British government. It was obvious that the Transvalers would not willingly submit to British rule, and likely that they would repeat their former

attempt to expel the British from the Sovereignty. If an agreement could be made with them, there might be a chance of consolidating the régime south of the Vaal. By the Sand River Convention, therefore, the independence of the Transvaalers was recognised. Sixteen years after the beginning of the Trek Great Britain abandoned her claim to the allegiance of these trekkers at least. Some 20,000 of them were now free to realise in the far interior the aims which they had pursued for so long in the wilderness.

This concession may perhaps be regarded as inevitable, or at least as wise and statesmanlike. The step which followed was of a different character, one of a series of blunders and vacillations which the British government committed either through ignorance of South African affairs or indifference to them or through lack of foresight. One example of this had already occurred in Natal. After repeatedly declining to annex that territory Britain suddenly did so, but only after the trekkers had established themselves there with great difficulty and loss. From the Whitehall point of view this was a step taken reluctantly for the sake of strategic security and under pressure from Cape interests and missionary influences. From the trekker point of view it was a dog-in-the-manger attitude and became for generations a bitter memory to complicate South African affairs.

Now the annexation of the Sovereignty, the battle of Boomplaats, the concession of independence to the Transvaal, the migration of republicans across the Vaal and of loyalists across the Orange had collected there, among about 10,000 settlers, a majority loyal to the Crown. The original nucleus of this party had been the emigrants from the northern districts of the Cape who had come before the Great Trek and did not feel the political impulses of that movement. The natural destiny of the Sovereignty, in the eyes of many on both sides of the Orange, was annexation to the Cape Colony. Had this occurred the old Colony would have dominated the sub-continent sufficiently, perhaps, to avert many of the disasters that were to come. Her liberal institutions and traditions would have reached the Vaal and, perhaps, withstood the pressure of the opposite traditions from beyond that river. There would

have been no dispute over the diamond fields. Some of the obstacles that stood in the way of federation in the 'seventies would never have been erected.

The price Britain would have to pay for these benefits was an expenditure of money on defence which, though trivial in comparison with the sums that had ultimately to be spent because the opposite policy was adopted, were more than the British treasury and public were then prepared to pay. Moshesh in 1851 had discomfited the British Resident at Viervoet. The Cape Governor Cathcart in 1852 tried to teach the Basuto a lesson, but withdrew after the indecisive engagement at Berea. Thus the settlers in the Sovereignty lost confidence in the government's determination or ability to defend them, and those who supported the Resident in his operations against Moshesh were selected by that chief for spoliation and destruction. The burghers therefore would not turn out on commando. A fair-sized army would have overawed the Basuto and rallied the white inhabitants, but the government in Britain was unwilling to provide one and its agents on the spot would not take the responsibility of badgering it into doing so. The tide of opinion in England was flowing strongly against the possession of colonies. Disraeli had just been calling them "millstones round our necks". The corn laws and the navigation acts had been repealed. Free Trade, "Little Englandism" and economy combined forces with the colonial reform and self-government party to attack expansion and Colonial Office rule. The decision was therefore made to abandon the Sovereignty.

Representatives elected by the people protested. They were then dismissed as "obstructionists" and a body of republicans consulted instead. Their party, hitherto weak, increased in strength as news arrived of petitions against abandonment which had been drawn up in the Cape Colony and cast the same sort of aspersions on the Sovereignty people as the missionaries had often done on the Boers in general—"unjustifiable odium". One of these odious petitions came from the Swellendam presbytery of the Dutch Reformed Church, which now spoke the same language as the London Missionary Society.

The contemplated step was taken in 1854. The Orange River Sovereignty became the Orange Free State. As has been



hinted above, the change was ultimately to strengthen the Transvaal influence throughout South Africa. It even formed a precedent against the later retention of the Transvaal by Great Britain. When a deputation from that territory interviewed Sir Michael Hicks Beach in 1879 to demand independence, and he asked them to name any country over which the British Crown had voluntarily renounced its sovereignty, Kruger immediately named the Free State. Yet the policy of 1854 was initiated not by the Transvaal but by Great Britain, and the historian must judge policies by their effectiveness in serving the ends they were meant to serve. This one was therefore a blunder.

The burghers of the Free State drew up a constitution and elected a president. Two years later the people of the South African Republic, as the Transvaal was now called, took the same step. But whereas the Free State people were united in a common loyalty, their northern neighbours were deeply effected by the anarchic conditions of their long trek. During all those years the primary loyalty of the trekker had been to the leader of his own little company. As all the more determined bands arrived in the country beyond the Vaal the rivalry of their leaders produced political dissension that sometimes ended in violence.

Potgieter in 1845 moved from Potchefstroom to the far north-east and founded Andries-Ohrigstad in an unhealthy locality, indeed, but far from British influence and within reach of Delagoa Bay. This settlement was soon moved to the neighbouring but healthy site of Lydenburg. The emigrants who abandoned Natal and the Sovereignty moved into the vacated district of Potchefstroom; but some of these, too, preferred Lydenburg. At the latter place therefore Potgieter and his supporters were no longer in undisputed control; so they trekked again, this time to the remote Zoutpansberg where the leader had visited Trigardt in the first days of the trek. Four Commandants-General now divided the allegiance of the burghers. In Potchefstroom and Rustenburg, its northern neighbour, each could choose either Pretorius or Potgieter for his lord—a curious and baneful example of non-territorial sovereignty. Lydenburg and Zoutpansberg refused to acknowledge the constitution adopted by the other districts.

Though nominal unity was achieved by 1860, the anarchical principle had bitten deeply into the people. In later generations, under vastly different conditions, the tendency to resolve differences of opinion by secession and *non possumus* was still strong. That tendency was apparent in the very first year of the trek—it was implicit in the trek itself—it appeared in the republic of Natalia and again in the South African Republic, but not in that of the Free State.

The original constitution of the two surviving republics are of interest both for their differences and for their similarities; as illustrations of the reaction against the latter-day liberalism of the Cape and of the experience gained in the course of the trek. The Free State constitution was modelled to some extent on that of the second French Republic, recently defunct. It was a concise statement of fundamental law and owed its stability partly to the circumstances of the country, partly to the provision that it could be altered only by three-quarters majorities in the Volksraad in two successive sessions. The "fundamental law" of the South African Republic, on the other hand, was a diffuse document in which constitutional matters are mixed up with the "wishes" of the people on various subjects, the minute regulation of the proceedings of clerks and poundmasters, and the hours at which the public offices shall be open: "10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Saturdays, Sundays and holidays excepted". As a further encouragement to civil servants "all services required for the public shall be rewarded by the public". This constitution was flexible and could be altered by ordinary legislative procedure.

Both countries had the usual organs of central government: an elected Volksraad of one chamber, a popularly elected President and, to assist him, an Executive Council partly of office-holders and partly of members chosen by the Volksraad; a compromise, therefore, between responsible government and the separation of powers. Both had Landdrosts and Heemraden on the old Cape model in each district. The only central court was a bench of several Landdrosts, and this made an annual circuit. The President, too, was required to visit every district town once a year.

The military system was based on the frontier methods of

the old colony. Every burgher between sixteen and sixty was liable for service. The burghers of a ward elected their Field-Cornet, and (in the Transvaal) Assistant-Field-Cornets; the burghers of the whole district elected their Commandant. These officers, in the Free State, chose a Commandant-General in time of war to command them, but the office did not exist in peace-time. In the northern republic there was always a Commandant-General, chosen by popular vote. The army, therefore, consisted of units and sub-units of irregular size, divided geographically and without any fixed numerical strength, and commanded by elected officers. The Field-Cornets were officials with civil as well as military duties. There was no military uniform.

In the South African Republic the *vox populi* was listened to with great respect. Every proposed law, except such as "brook no delay", was to be published in the *Government Gazette* three months before its introduction in the legislature, so that "the public" might make its views heard in time. It had been usual in the early evanescent trekker republics for the Sovereign People to attend the sessions of its representatives and to make its own contributions to their discussion. The Transvaal constitution would not infringe this liberty further than to say that "no person present, who is not a member of the Volksraad, may speak, except when he has to reply to a question from the Chairman".

As the two republics were founded by trekkers it was natural that they should admit newcomers to citizenship on easy terms. A landowner acquired the right immediately in the Transvaal, after a year in the Free State; even without land, one year's residence in the Transvaal, three in the Free State, sufficed. An oath of allegiance was required, but all these arrangements seemed, in the 'fifties, to be straightforward and uncontroversial. In the next generation the survival of the South African Republic was thought to depend on their revision.

There was another, an indispensable, qualification for citizenship—a white skin. "The people" of the South African Republic "desire to permit no equality between coloured people and the white inhabitants, either in Church or State".

## CHAPTER VI

### DIAMONDS AND ENGLISHMEN

THE Cape Colony, before 1820, contained no more than a handful of people of British origin. Apart from official and military personnel there were a few merchants in the Cape Peninsula and an insignificant number of farmers. This situation was slightly modified in 1817, when a few hundred settlers arrived; but not seriously till 1820. The "1820 Settlers" were the first considerable body of British colonists to make their homes in South Africa.

They came for three reasons. The aftermath of war produced depression in Britain, unemployment and a rise in the poor rates. The government was anxious to divert the flow of emigration from the United States to the British colonies. And Lord Charles Somerset wanted a dense white population on the Cape's eastern border as a barrier against invasion. This need was felt all the more urgently after the Kaffir War of 1819.

On certain conditions free passages to the Cape were provided, and small land grants were to be made in the Zuurveld area between the Bushman's River and the Fish. The land and the passages were not to be granted to individuals but to the heads of parties, each of whom was to bring not fewer than nine other men with him. The leader would receive a hundred acres for each man in his party. Most of the parties, however, did not actually consist of a master and his dependants as envisaged by Lord Charles, but of independent emigrants who chose a head as their intermediary; the latter agreed to divide the land among the party on arrival. They came from all parts of the United Kingdom and from all classes of society, but with a great preponderance of artisans, tradesmen and labourers. Rather more than half were agriculturists by origin and experience, but that of course would not help them much in South African farming. At the same time as the organised parties, many came at their own expense. Altogether nearly 5000 settlers arrived in 1820 and 1821.

The shores of Algoa Bay were crowded with tents. As more ships unloaded their passengers the earlier arrivals departed in wagons hired from the Dutch farmers. At last all were deposited on the locations between Grahamstown and the coast. There, with a hundred acres to a man, they must fend for themselves. A closely packed agricultural population must create a smiling countryside out of the wilderness and build up a human wall against the Kaffirs. The settlers were to have no slaves, and there could be no question of the traditional 6000-acre farms.

This scheme was misconceived. It could not be known in advance that disease and flood would destroy three successive crops of wheat. On the other hand the high wages of artisans and labourers in the villages of the colony would be an insuperable menace to the policy of keeping the settlers on the land, and the large farms granted to the older population would provide grounds for the argument that the grants in the Zuurveld were too small to work. These things at least might have been foreseen.

The canvas camp at Algoa Bay grew into a town. Sir Rufane Donkin, acting Governor while Lord Charles was on leave, named it Port Elizabeth after the wife he had lost, "one of the most perfect of human beings". A few of the settlers of 1820, fishermen from Deal, refused to budge from it when they had landed, and plied their old trade in the bay. Others deserted their locations in Albany, as the new frontier district had been named, and made their way to Grahamstown or back to Port Elizabeth, to trades and crafts, to a competence or even more. Some went to towns further afield, others took to trading with the Kaffirs and hunting in the interior. Two years after their arrival three-quarters of the settlers had abandoned the land for other occupations.

This perversion of the 1820 scheme from its original intention was to have such far-reaching effects that it is worth while to consider the influences bearing upon it then and later. The agrarian conditions in the colony did not favour intensive agriculture. As the settlers who remained on the land in Albany enlarged their farms they developed into a prosperous community, but largely because they turned to sheep-farming. It

was thus shown that an English-speaking rural population could be established in the country, provided that it worked the land extensively, almost in the manner of the Dutch farmers. The numbers that could be settled on the land were therefore severely limited by the amount available in possession of the Crown. Within the existing limits of the colony this hardly extended beyond Albany itself, deserted by the Boers because of Kaffir irruptions. Thus a British farming community established itself along the frontier, from the Winterberg and the valleys of the Baviaans, the Koonap and the Kat, through Albany and along the coast to Port Elizabeth and Uitenhage. In this area, too, there were towns; but elsewhere the British element was purely urban, except where occasional farms were bought by the more prosperous. This happened in the neighbourhood of Cape Town and in a few isolated pockets elsewhere. Some notable families settled in the wild coastlands of Knysna.

As the frontier was pushed further eastward, British colonists settled on the new lands of Queenstown, Cathcart and British Kaffraria. The great empty interior was occupied by the trekking Boers. When these abandoned the greater part of Natal, that colony was the sole remaining area available for British rural settlement. In a very short time even this was seriously diminished by the rapid influx of Natives across the borders. Attempts were made to settle British immigrants on what remained. The enterprise of J. C. Byrne brought out about 4500 settlers between 1849 and 1851, but the land grants were too small to be remunerative. Exactly as had happened in Albany, the majority left the land for the towns, while some abandoned the colony altogether. The freedom of sale which had prevailed caused large areas to be bought up by speculators. These usually found that charging a rent to Native tenants was the most profitable way of using the land, and "Kaffir farming" thus became an obstacle to the settlement of European immigrants.

The conditions exhibited, and even created, by these early schemes determined the fate of later settlers. A few more batches of organised and assisted immigrants came from Britain before 1870, notably in 1858-62 when nearly 10,000 were brought to the Cape. Many of these left the colony

during the prolonged depression of the 'sixties. Most of the others settled in the towns. Then diamonds were discovered; Kimberley sprang into existence and immigration no longer needed official encouragement.

Here is the net result: in 1891, as far as can be gauged from the inadequate census returns of that year, about 35 per cent of the white population of the Cape Colony was of British origin. Of that element nearly three-quarters lived in urban areas. Of the whole British section between 25 and 30 per cent were concentrated in the Cape peninsula, a similar proportion in the towns of the Eastern Province, and perhaps 12 per cent in Kimberley. The rural areas of the old eastern frontier region accounted for most of the rest.

Of the Afrikaans-speaking people, on the other hand, almost 80 per cent were country-dwellers. The distinction between town and country, the conflict between urban and rural interests and ideas, almost coincided with the difference in national origins and the deeper difference between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries. The coincidence was in fact greater even than the figures suggest, because the Afrikaners in the towns tended to be anglicised; the British element in the Dutch countryside tended to a less extent, and much more slowly, to be assimilated to the people among whom it lived.

The anglicising process was advanced both by the arrival and concentration of the British colonists and by the deliberate policy of the government. In 1822 six schoolmasters were brought from Scotland to open, in the principal towns and villages, schools of a more advanced kind than had yet been seen in the colony. The medium of instruction was English, and many of the older inhabitants regarded the schools with hostility on that account. But the opposition was gradually broken down by the educational advantages offered. The influence of the schools was felt much more in the towns where they were situated than in the countryside which had no such easy access to them. As they began to train up a new generation a further step followed. On the initiative of people of both white nationalities the South African College was founded in Cape Town in 1829; of a status intermediate between high school and university college, it was the beginning of higher education

in the country, and the parent of a school and a university in the fullness of time.

Other steps were taken to the same end. English was made the sole official language of the colony, by stages beginning in 1823 and culminating in 1828. At the same time as the schoolmasters, clergymen were recruited in Scotland, taken to Holland for a quick course in the language, and appointed to Dutch Reformed livings in the colony. The ultimate result was to turn the descendants of these Murrays and Frasers, Robertsons and Sutherlands, into Afrikaners; but in the meantime the English language was heard in consistory, presbytery and synod. Dutch Reformed churches came, as the process went on, to hold some services in English. It looked to some people as if the anglicisation of the colony would be complete.

These were the measures of Lord Charles Somerset. There were other aspects of anglicisation for which the Tory Governor had not bargained when he brought out the Settlers. They came from an England hot with political passion over Cobbett and Hunt and the suspension of Habeas Corpus, over Sidmouth, Peterloo and the Six Acts. When the affairs of the Albany settlement went awry, the new colonists turned to thoughts of organisation, public meeting and petition. They discovered that all these could be, and were, prohibited by the word of an autocratic Governor. The birthrights of Englishmen were taken away from them. Other measures, as we have seen, appeared to be taking away the birthrights of the *trekboer*. The two nationalities reacted differently, each in its characteristic way, to threats which they regarded in much the same light. The Boer trekked. The Englishman founded a newspaper, sent protests to England, got the Whig M.P.s on to their feet to attack the house of Beaufort, to expose the tyranny of its scion the Governor of the Cape, to belabour the shaky Tory ministry with every complaint that arrived from Cape Town or Port Elizabeth.

The Liverpool Government had not so secure a hold on office that it could safely expose itself to this attack. These were times in which the liberty of the subject and of the press could no longer be tampered with as in the heyday of the anti-Jacobin reaction. It became known at Westminster that South



Africa's first newspaper, launched in 1824, had been suppressed by Lord Charles for refusing to be silent about a libel case in which he was concerned, and the publisher expelled from the colony. The first magazine, started in the same year, collapsed after airing the grievances of the Albany settlers and incurring the Governor's displeasure. These journalistic ventures, and the petition which went to England after the Governor's suppression of them, were largely the work of the new British settlers. Lord Charles was given "leave" to repair to London with his explanations, after which he was not sent back to the colony. The freedom of the press, with the usual limitations concerning libel, was established in the colony on instructions from the Secretary of State. A nominated Executive Council placed slight restrictions on the hitherto despotic power of the Governor. The Charter of Justice of 1827 brought regularity and, indeed, legality into the judicial system. These were some of the first results of the agitations that had been set afoot by the new colonists.

More were to follow. Englishmen naturally regarded an elected legislature as their best protection against the abuses from which they had been suffering in their new home. In the very year of the Charter of Justice they petitioned the Crown for this boon. In 1830 they did so again. The Dutch of the settled West, in this as in many other matters, shared the English view and supported the petitions. When the Mother of Parliaments was reformed the resistance to colonial demands could no longer be so vigorous, but the racial division at the Cape still seemed an insuperable obstacle to real popular government. Nevertheless a step was taken in that direction in 1834, when a legislative council of nominated members was added to the old executive council as a check on the Governor's powers.

For twenty years this council was the legislating body of the colony. Half of its members were officials holding their seats in virtue of their offices, and voting as instructed by the Governor (except, sometimes, when he was away on the frontier!) The other half were colonists, nominated by the Governor but not removable during his tenure of office. As the Governor's vote would be decisive when the members were

equally divided, officialdom always had its way, and the colonists regarded the system as little better than a farce.

All the time popular pressure was exerted to obtain more political freedom. One of the consequences of parliamentary reform in Britain was the reform of municipal government, and within a year of that development elected municipal boards were granted to the Cape. The franchise depended on a small property qualification—identical with the borough franchise of 1832 in England—and without distinction of race.

Slowly the colonists acquired the experience that was thought to fit them for greater responsibility. As part of a scheme for the development of roads, Road Boards were elected in the divisions. Commercial, cultural and religious organisations accustomed people to the technique of self-government. The Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church was freed from official supervision and given full control of its affairs.

The principle of the equality of all races was so well established in the laws and habits of the colony that the greatest objection to granting an elected Parliament was now thought to have been removed. There remained the danger of conflict between Dutch and British. This obstacle was overcome in a dramatic fashion. As the Australian colonies resisted the continued transportation of convicts to their continent, the thought of sending them to the Cape occurred to Whitehall. A shipload of them reached Simon's Bay in 1849. This was a danger perfectly fitted to unite the colonists of all races, however divided on other questions. The Anti-Convict Association rallied all to resist the pollution of the colony by such immigrants. The Governor, Sir Harry Smith, agreed to prevent their landing until he should have received further instructions, but the people boycotted the government and the commissariat and pledged themselves never to receive or succour the convicts. Anyone having dealings with the unwelcome ship was ostracised, Councillors and Field-Cornets resigned their positions. Under this pressure the Colonial Office gave way and the convict ship sailed for Van Diemen's Land.

Many of the people thus rejected by the proud colony were political rather than criminal offenders. One of them, the Irishman John Mitchell, afterwards expressed his admiration

of the colonists' patriotism on this occasion. But they must have included their share of potential "sundowners", bushrangers and robbery-under-arms men. The struggle was not unimportant in itself, for South Africa was then a law-abiding country and was destined long to remain so. The indirect consequences were still more important. The leading colonial journalist, John Fairbairn, was not exaggerating when he claimed that "the people of the Cape of Good Hope have shown to the world what it is that constitutes a state". And indeed it was difficult to withhold further political liberties from people who had thus proved themselves. Discussion of constitutional details, begun before the anti-convict agitation, continued. In 1854 the new constitution took effect.

Other British colonies possessed representative institutions, some already of old standing. Yet in some respects the Cape system was a new departure. In a community where the coloured races were twice as numerous as the white, the franchise knew no distinction of race. The occupation of immovable property of a capital value—not annual rent—of £25 was sufficient to qualify. This would exclude the occupant of the Kaffir hut, of the *pondok* of sacking or corrugated iron, and (on the Attorney-General's ruling) farm labourers; but few others. Voting was by word of mouth, not by ballot papers, so there was no literacy test. For many years a large proportion of the qualified coloured people failed to make use of their privilege; but it could not be denied to them.

There were two houses of Parliament. In most colonies the upper house, the Legislative Council, was nominated; at the Cape it was elected by the same voters as the House of Assembly. The Legislative Council was a conservative body because its members had to possess a high property qualification, but they and their house enjoyed the prestige conferred by popular election.

Apart from the franchise, the most significant thing about these parliamentarians was their division on geographical lines. In 1836, after the Sixth Kaffir War, the colony had been divided into a Western and an Eastern province by a line which ultimately extended from a point on the coast east of Plettenberg Bay to the Orange River east of Prieska. During the next eleven

years various men held the office of Lieutenant-Governor of the Eastern Province, with the special duty of dealing with the problems and dangers of the frontier. As most of the British settlers were concentrated in that province they soon adopted as their aim its separation from the west as a distinct colony or a federated province, or alternatively the removal of the capital to the east. They claimed that as the main function of government was to defend the frontier they could have no confidence in rulers whose view extended no further than the shadow of Table Mountain. The new settlers had thus, by a curious geographical determinism, stepped into the vacated shoes of the old Graaff-Reinet republicans and others who were now handling frontier problems further north.

Under these circumstances the 1854 constitution consecrated the division into provinces. Though there were far more voters in the Western Province, it possessed only two more seats in the Lower House than the east. The Legislative Council was elected quite frankly by the provinces, each of which formed one constituency: the west chose eight members in one block, the east seven. There were to be occasions when each of these factions voted solidly, west against east.

The conflict was modified by the circumstance that this Parliament had no control over the executive. It existed only to legislate. The Governor governed, assisted by men who were not ministers depending on a parliamentary majority, but pure bureaucrats, permanent heads of departments. As in seventeenth-century England, this Governor and his faithful Commons were permanently at loggerheads. The 'sixties were a time of severe depression. "Retrench," said Parliament. "Increase taxation and the powers of the executive," suggested the Governor. In the background were the easterners with their refrain of "separation or the removal of the capital". Once, in 1864, Parliament was summoned to meet at Grahamstown, causing such an upheaval in the civil service that the experiment was not repeated. Such upheavals were to be an annual event in the twentieth century, but the bureaucrats of the eighteenth-sixties could not take it.

There might have been a way out of this deadlock if the legislators had been united, but they were not. The "East-

erners" had before their eyes the separation of Upper from Lower Canada in 1791, and of Victoria from New South Wales in 1851. The Eastern Province was to be the Ontario of South Africa, the British province on the frontier. Unfortunately their analogies were not applicable. It was not the whole Eastern Province, but only its south-eastern triangle, that was British. The rest, the "Midlands", was Dutch. The Midlanders had no taste for a Settler government ruling them from Grahamstown. The British section in the Cape peninsula and other western districts would be weakened by the detachment of the east. Thus it came about that the separation of the provinces was opposed by the British of the west as well as the whole of the Afrikaner population.

In 1866 the Westerners got some new recruits. The old crown colony of British Kaffraria was annexed to the Cape by a British act of Parliament which hung *in terrorem* over the Cape legislature. The latter then passed an annexing act, but with a bad grace. The white people of the new territory were mainly British, though including a large German element of ex-legionaries of the Crimean War. They did not, however, fall easily into line with their neighbours the Easterners. These were essentially the party of a Grahamstown and Port Elizabeth clique, which to some extent repelled the Kingwilliamstown and East London people.

Though there were no organised parties, this picture gives the rough preliminary sketch of a future party system. Still, there were cross-currents. The obvious solution to the political deadlock was to follow the example of Canada and most of Australasia and introduce a responsible cabinet in place of the old executive. This idea was naturally opposed by the Easterners because they were a minority. It was opposed by others for other reasons. Responsible government might mean full responsibility for colonial defence: no more imperial troops. This touched the British Kaffrarians in their need for security, and touched everybody in his pocket. Some were afraid of the coloured vote, some were just conservative by temperament. So no majority could be found for responsible government, nor for strengthening the executive, nor for separation of the provinces.

This favourite eastern idea had other weaknesses besides the large opposition in the Eastern Province itself. The whole colony felt that imperial troops were needed on the frontier. The expense of that service, too great for the whole, would be unbearable for the part. Even if the provinces were federated, it was precisely defence that would be the chief federal concern. The Easterners wanted to control frontier policy without being in a position to pay for it. There was a discrepancy between their autonomist sentiments and their human and economic resources.

This inability of a British community to establish itself as a separate entity in South Africa was significant and prophetic. The fundamental reason for it may be expressed in a few words. When the British came the only areas left for them to occupy were either on the dangerous frontiers or already largely inhabited by Natives. Such areas were the costliest to administer but the cost had to be borne mainly by the other regions. There was no escape from this dependence.

At the end of the 'sixties a new era began in South Africa, the British element in the population increased and the distinctive character it had already acquired was sharply accentuated. Over the depression of that time hung a threat that intensified the gloom: the Suez Canal was being dug and would shortly push South Africa off the great trade route into a sluggish backwater. But two years before the canal was opened a diamond was found on the banks of the Orange River.

It was just one of a number of stones used as playthings by a farmer's children. It attracted the notice of a visiting farmer, was instantly presented to him, then tested by an expert and the news was out. In the course of 1868 and 1869 more were found, mainly along the banks of the lower Vaal River, well beyond the borders of the colony. Fortune-seekers rushed to the scene from all parts of South Africa and from overseas. In 1870 attention was diverted from the river diggings by the discovery of the far richer deposit—the richest in the world—where Kimberley now stands.

In whose territory were these diggings? The answer to that question was as complex as the unravelling of the titles to Schleswig-Holstein which had recently troubled the diplomatic

world. Rival claims to the disputed territory had been put forward well before the first diamond was picked up. The land thereabouts was so barren that one may wonder why anyone troubled to claim it. A Colesberg law agent named David Arnot was one of the class of imperial expansionists represented afterwards by Southey and Rhodes. He was one of the first to see the possibilities for Britain in the as yet wild lands west and north of the Transvaal. Hunters, traders and missionaries had been entering that region by the great northern "road" which ran through the lands of the Griquas and the Bechuana, passing to the west of the country settled by the Trekkers. If the Republics should expand westward far enough to control that road, there could be no British advance into the interior. M. W. Pretorius, President of the South African Republic, knew the importance of the road as well as Arnot. For that stake Arnot played an exciting game against Pretorius and others. He afterwards said that he had won the game without a single trump card in his hand.

Arnot became legal adviser to the Griqua chief Nicholas Waterboer, and set about establishing the latter's claim to a wide territory. Waterboer's sovereignty had to be defended against other Griqua and Bantu chieftains, but primarily against the Free State. Briefly, Waterboer's case was based on a series of treaties among the chiefs and with the Free State and the British. If the treaties were recognised, the case was good. The Free State replied by pointing out that the Orange River Sovereignty had included the land bounded by the Orange, the Vaal and the Drakensberg, and that the Free State had succeeded to all of it. This claim was untenable, as the Free State itself recognised the independence of various Native tribes within those bounds. What was more to the point was the fact that the Free State had for many years actually governed the disputed land south of the Vaal, which included Kimberley and was the chief bone of contention. The Free State claim rested on occupation and prescription, Waterboer's claim on treaties; and it might be said that some of the treaty-makers disposed of lands which were not theirs in the first instance.

Further north various Bantu chiefs disputed the boundary with the South African Republic. In that region it was the

Transvaal that depended on treaties, and even verbal agreements imperfectly remembered, whereas the Natives could show actual occupation. Their case was analogous to that of the Free State, whereas the Transvaal claims were on the same basis as Waterboer's. Yet such were the passions involved that all later commentators have tried either to defend or to reject the claims of the two republics in one and the same breath.

It was the practice of the South African Republic to grant farms to its burghers and to put them on the map while their occupation by Natives made it physically impossible for the grantees to take possession of them. Then the nominal owners would claim that Natives were squatting illegally on their farms. Much of the expansion of the Republic had taken place on this basis. When diamonds were found on the north bank of the lower Vaal in 1868, Pretorius acted in the spirit of this policy: he annexed by proclamation the whole country westward to the longitude of Lake Ngami, and on the east a narrow strip to the sea. It was hoped that actual occupation would follow the paper claims. But the Cape Governor, the missionaries and the Portuguese all protested, and Pretorius tacitly dropped his measure.

He then approached the matter from other angles. A monopoly of diamond digging on the lower Vaal was granted to a syndicate; and the diggers on the spot immediately set up their own republic. A treaty was made with the Portuguese, and Pretorius claimed to inherit from them the whole interior. By shifting his ground so often he weakened his case. But the diggings could not continue in anarchy, and when the new High Commissioner, Sir Henry Barkly, arrived on the scene in 1871 he persuaded the Transvaal, though not the Free State, to submit its claims to arbitration. Keate, Lieutenant-Governor of Natal, was the final arbiter. His award went against the Transvaal, placing its western boundary at the Maquassi spruit.

The anger of the Transvalers was turned against Pretorius for his bad handling of their case. He was forced to resign the presidency. But the principal diggings were no longer in the lands which Pretorius had claimed and lost. They were south of the Vaal. Keate was not concerned with that area, but in fixing Waterboer's north-eastern beacon he accepted, by implication,



the whole of Arnot's argument. Waterboer in the meantime had asked for British protection. Barkly therefore, without loss of time, annexed the whole of Griqualand West, as shown on modern maps, to the British Crown.

While the Transvaal had little reason for righteous indignation, the dismay of the Free State was shared by a great body of opinion throughout South Africa, including many of the British colonists. The Free State had been deprived of territory over which it had been actually exercising sovereign authority for many years. This had happened after diamonds had been discovered in the territory, and, although Waterboer was the rival claimant, it was Great Britain that had acquired the country. In spite of its plausible basis in law, the whole proceeding had an ugly look. The historian Theal, who lived through this experience, thought a generation later that this annexation had done more to embitter relations between the two white communities than any other single event.

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## CHAPTER VII

### THE IMPERIAL FACTOR

THE annexation of Griqualand West was one of a series of events that mark a major change in British colonial policy. The vacillations of the Colonial Office were not due to the alternations of the parties in power. They were caused by the slow operation of forces in the background of politics, old pressure-groups losing their strength, new interests rising to predominance. These changes take their place naturally and easily in a history of Britain; but in their impact on South Africa they appear merely as inconsistency and breach of faith. The South African situation remains essentially unchanged, but the British attitude to that situation is reversed and reversed again. Much bitterness and misunderstanding have been the result. Agar-Hamilton accuses the Colonial Office of a "century-long failure to decide on the purpose of its being in South Africa". Having no clearly-conceived purpose, it was buffeted about by the force of circumstances.

In the early part of the nineteenth century the memory of the American and French Revolutions hung over colonial policy. Colonies were destined to fall like ripe fruit from the tree; democratic institutions would hasten the fall. Some Englishmen regretted this necessity, others welcomed it, but all felt that the parting, if unavoidable, should be friendly. Self-government was therefore conceded when it was loudly enough demanded. But in the case of South Africa there was a force working in a contrary direction, causing Whitehall to keep a firm hold on the Cape. This was the humanitarian movement of which the abolition of the slave trade, then of slavery, then the Protection of Aborigines, were aspects. Missionary societies, responding to reports from their men in the field, wielded great influence at Westminster, and Colonial Secretaries were very sensitive to it.

By the 'forties this influence, though still considerable, was losing ground. Economy was becoming a stronger motive,

the British taxpayer a more powerful influence than the missionary. The introduction of the income-tax made it possible to dispense with the revenue from protective duties, and the Irish potato famine gave the final impetus to the movement towards free trade. A rise or fall in the rate of income-tax affects the interests of the taxpayer very directly and obviously, and Chancellors of the Exchequer now showed more tenderness to these interests than ever before. Moreover, free trade destroyed what was supposed to be the basis of the Empire itself, the complementary economic rôles of mother country and colonies and their mutual interdependence.

Under these circumstances imperial expansion appeared an absurd and mischievous process, and British expenditure on colonies as bad business. Bad business, to the Manchester school, was something not far removed from sin. Yet it was not clear that expansion would always and inevitably mean greater expenditure. An annexation here or there might bring a secure natural frontier cheaper to defend than the old one. When a South African High Commissioner could show that this would follow, he might, though with misgivings, be given permission to push the border further out. Thus the persuasive Sir Harry Smith had no sooner reached the Cape than he annexed British Kaffraria and the Orange River Sovereignty. Natal had been taken five years earlier under pressure of various special circumstances.

This expansion was the last for twenty years. The Colonial Office soon got the impression that it had been fooled by its trusted "man on the spot". So little were these measures a guarantee of economy that Britain was almost immediately involved in the most expensive of all the wars on the Cape frontier—that of 1850-3—and the Resident in the Sovereignty was sharply defeated by the Basuto.

The angry Whitehall men responded to this disillusionment by a policy of "scuttle". The independence of the Transvaal was recognised, the Sovereignty abandoned and the Cape given a Parliament, all in the space of two years. Shortly afterwards Natal was disconnected from the Cape Colony and given a legislature in which officials and an elected majority sat in the same house.

The Crimean War and the Indian Mutiny intensified the reluctance to spend money on South Africa. The economising motive was, nevertheless, a dangerous factor. Penny-wise might turn out to be pound-foolish. In that case the need to spare the British taxpayer would lead to a reversal of policy that would involve the breach of engagements and even the tearing up of treaties. One Colonial Secretary would firmly veto a scheme propounded by an enthusiastic Governor, and even recall him for his disobedience; another would involve South Africa in years of strife by attempting to force on the country the very scheme that his predecessor had taken so much trouble to scotch.

When the scuttling operation had been carried out Sir George Grey arrived at the Cape. Under the influence of his experiences in New Zealand and his observations in South Africa he came to the conclusion that the best, as well as the cheapest, policy for the latter country was one of greater unification and the reversal of the tendency to disruption. It was obvious that the Native wars conducted by the republics would have repercussions on the colonial frontiers; that the weakness of the republics in men and money was a cause of their perpetual frontier disturbances; and obvious too, Grey thought, that a united white community could maintain peace and order where many weak states could not.

These considerations acquired a new urgency when the Free State declared war on its Basuto neighbours in 1858. Though boundary lines had often been laid down on maps, there was no real frontier between Free Staters and Basuto. The Boer pastoralists, to maintain their way of life, needed more and more land and tended to spread over it as quickly and inexorably as their ancestors had been doing since the days of Simon van der Stel. The Basuto, a new nation composed of fragments dispersed by the Zulus and Matabele, were fast increasing. They had taken shelter in the mountains, but when the danger had passed could no longer survive without spreading rapidly over the fertile plains below. Their huts and gardens sprang up on those plains, where their stock and that of the farmers intermingled. Both sides lost cattle and horses and killed rival intruders. As Moshesh would observe no boundary,

the Free State attacked him. But it had not the resources to sustain a long war against a people who could always retire to impregnable natural defences, and always emerge from them to lay waste the farms as soon as the weary commandos dispersed with the cry of "*huis-toe!*" The Free State abandoned the struggle. Grey intervened and laid down a new boundary which he knew would not be respected.

Many Free Staters thought that the only way to recruit their strength was to federate with the Cape Colony. Grey encouraged the idea, and urged a general federation upon the Colonial Secretary and upon the Cape Parliament. In doing this he disobeyed express instructions, and was recalled, to return for a short time after undertaking to do nothing more of the kind. Britain had withdrawn from the troubled lands north of the Orange, and was resolved not to court trouble and expense in that region again. The Free State then turned to the north. A union with the Transvaal might serve the purpose. Pretorius, President of the South African Republic, was elected President of the Free State as well. The personal union might lead to something more. At this point the Colonial Office showed the other side of its dual personality.

The two republics owed their independence to the Sand River and Bloemfontein Conventions. Both had, in these agreements, undertaken to forbid slavery in their territories. There were dark and partially substantiated stories of the existence of that institution in the Transvaal under the name of "apprenticeship". If the charge could be proved, there would be grounds for denouncing the Sand River Convention as having been broken by the Transvalers themselves. This idea had been entertained in London, though not very seriously. But the annexation of the Free State by its northern neighbour might bring the abuses and the responsibility for them right down to the Orange. Determined not to allow this, and fearful of a big republic in the interior, the British authorities informed both republics that their union might give rise to doubts whether, or to what extent, the Conventions were still valid. The Transvaal was too tenacious of its independence to take this risk, and even the Free State would cling to the bird in its hand till it knew what the alternative would be. Moreover,

while Pretorius was at Bloemfontein, his other country dissolved into warring factions, so that it was clear that he could not fill the two posts at once. He resigned the Free State presidency, crossed the Vaal again, and the experiment of a personal union came to an end.

The Orange Free State was too weak to cope with the problems that had been thrust into its unwilling hands in 1854. One reason for the weakness was its inadequate revenue. Young communities depend much more upon indirect than upon direct taxation to fill their coffers. At this time about half the revenue of the Cape Colony came from customs duties. Imports to the Free State were brought through the ports of the Cape and Natal, where duties were paid; but neither colony would concede any part of this money to the country for which the goods were destined. It was alleged that such a concession would give the Free State the means to undertake policies harmful to the colonies, or over which the British, who granted the money, would at any rate have no control. This difficulty was one of the strongest inducements to the Free State to federate with the colonies.

Foiled in two attempts to escape from its impossible position, the Free State then elected as President J. H. Brand, a Cape advocate and member of Parliament, son of the Speaker of the House of Assembly. In 1865 war broke out again on the turbulent Basuto frontier. The strain on the little republic was very great, but it was fighting for its existence and made a tremendous effort. The existence of the Basuto nation also was at stake. The Boer commandos, however, destroyed their enemy's crops, captured cattle and stormed several mountain strongholds by a ruse which was successfully repeated on various occasions. In 1866 Moshesh was brought to accept a peace in which the Free State took all the fertile lowlands, more even than the area in dispute.

If this treaty stood, the Basuto would cease to exist as an independent force, being deprived of their economic basis. To break them up was frankly Brand's purpose. But what would happen to them then? They were already pouring into the lands bordering the Cape Colony. No British Governor with a sense of responsibility could allow this. Moshesh appealed for

British protection, begged to become a British subject. Shepstone, Secretary for Native Affairs in Natal, coveted Basutoland for his colony. The legislators there saw in the Basuto some useful potential taxpayers. There was a widespread realisation that the lands left to them could not support the Basuto. The Colonial Office, pushed along by events, pulled back by the thought of the budget, agreed to the acceptance of Moshesh's offer if either Natal or the Cape would annex him and bear the expense.

What the Basuto wanted was British protection, not annexation to a colony; but if it must be to a colony, then to the Cape rather than Natal. Unless the Free State were deprived of lands it had long held, there would be no link between Natal and Basutoland, divided as they were by an almost impassable mountain range. But Wodehouse, the Governor, had had such difficulties with the Cape Parliament that he saw little value in an annexation to that colony either. And there was so much sympathy for the Free State there that no approval of a policy of robbing the victor of his spoils could be expected. Wodehouse's way out of the difficulty was to annex Basutoland to the Empire; thus disregarding his instructions, as so many of his predecessors had done before him.

The Free State felt itself cheated. Britain had annexed that country against its will, then made it independent against its will, then refused it the support of the Cape and forbidden its union with the Transvaal. Even the raising of volunteers in British territory had been prohibited. Now that victory over the Basuto—which Britain had refused to seek because of the expense—was almost complete, Britain stepped in to undo its effects. On the other hand the break-up of the Basuto people was a serious menace to the peace of the British colonies. And the Free State had weakened its position by expelling from the annexed territory the Paris Evangelical missionaries, the chief civilising agents among the Basuto. Like their colleagues of the L.M.S. in earlier times they were accused of being "political", of giving aid and encouragement to the enemy. The expulsion was ordered by the Volksraad and deplored by the President; it made a very bad impression in England and France. A Free State deputation went to London; but the annexation stood.

The boundary had still to be defined. In negotiating this at Aliwal North Wodehouse recovered for the Basuto some of what they had lost at the time of their defeat, but not nearly as much as they claimed. The outline of Basutoland was drawn as it remains today. When the terms were known the legislators in Bloemfontein were pleasantly surprised; it was the chiefs and missionaries that protested.

The moral of this story of vacillation is as important as the facts themselves. The annexation of Basutoland has been represented as a treacherous blow, as an unprincipled seizure of the fruits of another's efforts. Further, Great Britain in the Bloemfontein Convention denied any "wish or intention" to make a treaty with any Native tribe north of the Orange. The words do not imply an obligation; but did they not have a certain moral force? From various points of view the annexation may appear a breach of faith. Yet under the circumstances of 1868 it was the obvious course of statesmanship. The fault lay not there, but in the impossible undertakings of 1854. The self-denial of that year could not be sustained unless Britain removed herself from South Africa altogether. If the scuttle were not to be completed it should never have been begun. As a British junior minister said in 1871, "we are reaping the fruits of our folly in ever abandoning the authority over the Orange River Territory". The evil that men do lives after them.

Such as it was, the settlement of the boundary caused an exodus from Basutoland. The Free State farmers got plenty of labour. The citizens of Bloemfontein complained of an excess of idle Natives in the capital. But the dry diggings of Kimberley were opened the year after the treaty of Aliwal North. Labour was wanted there, and when that territory, too, was annexed by Britain, the labourers at the diggings could buy guns and powder with their wages. The Basuto found the second annexation a useful complement to the losses which were consecrated by the first.

First Basutoland, then Griqualand West. A punch at the Free State from the right was followed up with a blow from the left. Both can be defended on the ground that the peace and security of the British colonies demanded them. Neither was a great disadvantage to the Free State. One gave her additional



territory, a secure border and a labour supply, the other a market; yet the tactless handling of the situation had led to the breach of at least the moral implications of a treaty, and left behind a sense of wrong which turned the Free State from an outlier of the Cape Colony into a self-conscious and increasingly anti-British republic.

It is hardly necessary to point out that neither annexation was the result of any greed of territory or imperial urge in England. The Colonial Office gave permission for annexations to Natal and the Cape, but Wodehouse and Barkly departed from their instructions. They took steps which they regarded as indispensable for the maintenance of peace and order in South Africa as a whole.

When the new government of Griqualand West tried to introduce order into the land tenure of the colony and investigated the basis of land titles, it discovered that the claims of Waterboer could not be sustained. Thus Arnot's house of cards collapsed, but only after the harm had been done. By that time there was a British population at the diggings which, if it had been incorporated in the Free State, would have been enough to decide the issue in presidential elections. Brand realised this, and agreed to accept £90,000 and regard the question as closed. The Colonial Secretary did not ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer for this money; it was charged to the account of Griqualand West.

Great Britain, having burnt her fingers in the South African fire, would have been glad to keep clear of it in future. In her attempts to get clear she was burnt still more severely.

It was now apparent in London, as it had formerly been to Sir George Grey, that the situation might be eased if all the colonies and republics could be federated. In Grey's time the Cape and the Free State at least had shown signs of moving in that direction. If this movement could be started again, a strong and united South Africa might be created to relieve British governments of heavy and costly responsibilities. It was the tragedy of the 'seventies that the attempt to bring about this union produced friction, suspicion and disunity that have left permanent marks on the country.

The examples of Canada, Italy and Germany gave a great impetus to the movement for federation. In 1874 Lord Carnarvon returned to the Colonial Office, where he had sat when the Dominion of Canada had been brought into being. It was his ambition to repeat this achievement in South Africa. But obstacles stood in the way, and Carnarvon's methods were not of the kind that would remove them.

The annexations of Basutoland and Griqualand West stiffened the attitude of the Free State; Brand would have nothing to do with confederation. The constitutional dilemma in the Cape Colony had been resolved in 1872 by the grant of responsible government. Molteno, the Prime Minister, depended largely on the support of Dutch votes, and these supporters had strong sympathies with the Free State. The Cape therefore approached the confederation question very warily. The Easterners tended to welcome the idea in the hope that their province might form a separate unit in the federation, but opposition to eastern separation was one of the chief planks in Molteno's platform.

Natal would welcome the financial and military support of the rest of South Africa in dealing with the Zulus and her own Natives, but commercial motives had the opposite effect. Her trade with the interior was helped by a lower customs tariff than that of the Cape, and federation would remove this advantage. Moreover, Natal was in 1875 smarting under the sting of a reproof administered by the Colonial Office. The Hlubi tribesmen, followers of Chief Langalibalele, were returning from the diamond fields with guns, which they were not allowed to possess in Natal without permission from the Lieutenant-Governor. The chief refused to appear when summoned to account for the breach of this regulation. A punitive expedition brought him in, punished another tribe as well as his, and Langalibalele was tried by a specially appointed court unknown to the constitution. The Lieutenant-Governor was judge as well as prosecutor. The accused was condemned to life imprisonment on Robben Island, the traditional prison of Native chiefs who were neither swimmers nor navigators. As Robben Island happens to lie in Table Bay, it was necessary for the Cape Parliament to pass an act enabling the Natal court's

sentence to be carried out. This was done, but all the proceedings were so irregular that the Colonial Secretary had no hesitation in ordering them to be reversed. Both the Cape and Natal were hurt. There was no chance of converting the Transvaal to federation; her part in the story will appear later.

Under these circumstances it was tactless of Carnarvon to take the initiative in so important a matter. He not only proposed a conference, but nominated the delegates to attend it, and included the leader of the eastern separatists in the list: Molteno, tenacious of the self-governing privileges of his colony, stood upon his dignity. So did the Free State. Natal had, in the Langalibalele affair, shown itself incapable of self-government, so Sir Garnet Wolseley was sent there to coax the colonists and their legislature into an abandonment of their existing privileges. The Council was subjected to a majority of nominees, where the elected members had hitherto been more numerous. This arrangement lasted for five critical years.

Carnarvon made matters worse by sending Froude, the historian, on a speech-making tour of South Africa. Froude stumped the Cape Colony in the interests of the parties opposing Molteno, a proceeding which the latter thought odd for an agent of the British government. Carnarvon then summoned a federation conference to London; only delegates from Griqualand West and Natal, which were fully controlled from London, attended. The British Parliament passed a permissive act, but no response came from South Africa.

Only one territory remained to be cajoled—the South African Republic. Carnarvon thought he saw a gleam of hope in that direction. It was not that the Transvaalers were likely federalists—they were the principal isolationists of the whole country. But their government was breaking down. After the removal of Pretorius they followed the example of the Free State and elected a Cape Colonist as President. T. F. Burgers was a Dutch Reformed clergyman with liberal tendencies which had got him into trouble with his church. But he had an ingratiating manner and seems to have had a close connection with the Cape Commercial Bank. This bank afterwards lent him £60,000 to straighten out the finances of his state. Yet the credit of the republic remained so low that he was unable to

raise in Europe more than a small part of the money needed for a railway to Delagoa Bay. In April, 1877, the cash in the Transvaal treasury amounted to twelve shillings and sixpence.

The President's religious views were regarded by puritanical citizens as certain to bring calamity upon the country. Some migrated across the Kalahari and did not stop till they reached Angola. When the Bapedi chief Sekukuni rebelled and the President took charge of the operations against him, few of the Boers were willing to follow such a leader. The expedition was a failure; and Sekukuni's land was needed for purposes connected with the Delagoa Bay railway.

In the eastern districts of the republic, near the disturbed area, gold mining had begun and British and other immigrants had established themselves. Some of these called for British intervention. Shepstone, the Secretary for Native Affairs in Natal, feared that a war between the Zulus and the Transvaal, arising out of a boundary dispute, was imminent. Here were all the factors that had caused Britain to intervene on other occasions, and they might do so again. If the Transvaal could be brought under British control, the Free State might be unable to hold aloof from the federal plan, Natal and Griqualand West had no voice of their own, and the Cape could hardly remain out of a union embracing the rest of the country.

Shepstone was therefore sent to the Transvaal to investigate the possibilities, and to annex the country if public opinion were favourable. He was accompanied by twenty-five policemen and was given a great welcome by the largely English population of the villages. After getting no satisfaction out of President or Volksraad he ran up the Union Jack at Pretoria. The Sand River Convention had been treated as a scrap of paper. Shepstone's proclamation had been read beforehand by Burgers, who in turn submitted to Shepstone the protest which he was to issue with the latter's secret permission. When this play-acting was over, Burgers returned to Cape Town, accepted a pension, and attended a ball at Government House.

Behind the scenes of the Transvaal stage moved the Cape Commercial Bank, whose directors were mainly Cape Afrikaners. Finding Burgers a bad debtor they had stopped all credit to him, demanded security for their past loans, got some

members of the republican Volksraad to move for an embarrassing statement of accounts, and appealed to the High Commissioner to save them. The annexation of the Transvaal was something more than a final gamble for federation by a desperate Colonial Secretary.

Even in April, 1877, when the deed was done, it was not too late to make a success of the existing situation. Shepstone had promised the Transvaalers self-government, but the fulfilment of this promise was postponed. Paul Kruger, the ex-Vice-President, twice went to London with other emissaries to see the Colonial Secretary. When Carnarvon showed that he believed the annexation to have been in accordance with popular feeling, Kruger saw his chance. It was clear that if Shepstone had fully obeyed his instructions, he would have got the Volksraad to ratify his action and so justified the annexation. But that had not been done. Burgers had been allowed to make a formal protest and the Volksraad had gone home. Public opinion, in fact, had still to be tested, and on his return to South Africa Kruger organised meetings and drew up petitions for and against the annexation. This informal vote showed the Boer population to be almost unanimous in demanding the restoration of independence. So, on his second visit to London, Kruger was able to show that the popular support on which Shepstone was supposed to have based his action did not exist. But the British government would not undo what had been done, and under these circumstances hesitated even to grant an elected legislature. A new Volksraad would not be co-operative.

One of the chief reasons for the annexation had been the danger of war with the Zulus; and it was a really formidable danger. After the defeat of Dingaan his brother Panda had ruled under the patronage of the Boers. As Panda grew old the real power fell into the hands of his son Ketshwayo, who at last succeeded his father in 1872. The new king followed the paths marked out by Shaka and Dingaan. He restored the old military system, with regiments composed of young braves who could not marry till they had "washed their spears" in blood. Shaka's warriors had done this in the blood of the Bantu tribesmen living anywhere within reach of Zululand, but

Ketshwayo could not cross his own border without invading the territory of Natal, the Transvaal or Portugal. The existence of the Zulu military system was therefore an obvious threat to one or more of these countries, but especially to Natal and the Transvaal. After 1877 this meant, in either case, Britain.

Apologists of the Zulus, like Bishop Colenso, admitted that the existence of a Zulu army of some 30,000 fearless, highly disciplined warriors was a "standing menace" to the white population of Natal, with a great multitude of Natives in their midst and a long and unprotected frontier. Fear of a Zulu invasion deepened in the course of 1878 when repeated and protracted drought had sent a wave of hungry restlessness moving through all the Bantu tribes. But, despite one or two nasty border incidents a war with Zululand on the Natal front did not seem inevitable. The most likely *casus belli* was a boundary dispute with the Transvaal whose outlying farmers had long been pursuing their traditional technique of encroachment on Native territory. In this dispute Shepstone, while in Natal, had supported the Zulu side; but, when, after the annexation, he examined the Boer documents at Pretoria he changed his mind. The Natal government appointed a commission to decide the question. Its verdict to everyone's surprise was in favour of the Zulu claim. To Sir Bartle Frere, the very able "pro-consul" whom Carnarvon had sent out as Governor of the Cape and High Commissioner in the hope that he would be able to put through federation and become the first Governor-General of a united South Africa, the verdict was embarrassing; to give effect to it without qualification was bound to have two awkward consequences. It would encourage Zulu aggression and it would finally alienate the Transvalers. Frere was well aware that Disraeli's Government wanted to avoid war with the Zulus, since war was imminent with the Afghans and war with Russia would be likely to follow. But he had made up his mind that a Zulu offensive might come at any moment and that the safest course was to crush the Zulu power in one quick campaign before the crisis in Europe came to a head. When explicit orders to avoid a war arrived, he had already combined with the announcement of the boundary award an ultimatum to Ketshwayo, requiring him among other things to break up

his military system and allow all men to marry when they chose. To go back on this ultimatum was impossible, and, when its time-limit expired early in January, 1879, three British columns crossed the Zulu border. Lord Chelmsford, the Commander-in-Chief, accompanied the force that crossed the Buffalo at Rorke's Drift. A few miles beyond that point the column encamped at a hill called Isandhlwana. In spite of the advice of Boer leaders, no laager or defence work of any kind was made round the camp. A Zulu force appeared some miles away and then retreated, drawing part of the British troops, under Chelmsford himself, after them. The main Zulu *impi* then surrounded the camp, pounced upon it and all but wiped out its defenders.

This disaster might have been followed by an invasion of Natal but for two circumstances. The Zulu losses at Isandhlwana had been so heavy that the surviving warriors, content to have "washed their spears", dispersed to their homes. And this impulse was confirmed when, on the night after the battle, a section of the Zulu army attacked the makeshift fort at Rorke's Drift and were repelled by its heroic little garrison again with heavy loss.

Isandhlwana took several months to avenge. In the course of the campaign the Prince Imperial of France, who insisted on serving in this war as a volunteer, was killed. "A very remarkable people, the Zulus," was Disraeli's comment. "They defeat our generals; they convert our bishops (a reference to Colenso); and they have settled the fate of a great European dynasty." The Prince was killed in a small skirmish. Operations on a larger scale brought converging columns to Ketschwayo's capital, Ulundi. There Chelmsford, just as he was about to be superseded by Wolseley, finally defeated and destroyed the Zulu military power.

The Transvaal Boers, with a few notable exceptions, played no part in this war. Britain had taken their country, so Britain, they felt, could defend it. But upon them the defeat of the Zulus had an effect like that of the defeat of France in Canada upon the American colonists. The Zulu danger was a reason, not altogether unappreciated, for Britain's continuing to rule the Transvaal. That reason having ceased to exist, the

mounting resentment of the Boers became less controllable. And after Ketshwayo the British subdued Sekukuni also.

One consideration caused Kruger to stay his hand. When in England he had heard Gladstone attack the government for its Transvaal policy. In 1880 Gladstone came into power, and might be expected to reverse the decisions of Disraeli. When this was not done the Transvaal Boers prepared to fight. The outbreak was precipitated by a significant incident. The British authorities, as short of money as their republican predecessors, pressed for the payment of taxes. The people replied that they would do so only under protest, so that the payment would not be taken to show willing submission to the government. The latter would not recognise the protest, and proceeded to enforce unconditional payment by seizing the wagon of a defaulter at Potchefstroom. The person thus distressed upon was, of all people, P. Bezuidenhout, whose name recalled the Slagter's Nek rebellion. A crowd of farmers came into the village, forcibly removed the bailiff from the wagon and took it back to its owner's farm.

Other events followed quickly. One more popular assembly was held at Paardekraal—since called Krugersdorp—where the resolution to fight for independence was taken, and a triumvirate of Kruger, Pretorius and Joubert elected. On December 16, 1880—Dingaan's Day—this government took possession of the Landdrost's office at Heidelberg and hoisted the republican flag.

The British were unprepared. Small detachments of troops were scattered about the country. One such force, marching from Lydenburg to Pretoria, was surprised at Bronkhorstspuit and overwhelmed. While skirmishes and sieges were continuing in various parts the British forces in Natal prepared to enter the Transvaal and relieve their countrymen. The Boers, too, concentrated at Lang's Nek where the road from Natal crossed the border. Colley, the British general, bears the main responsibility for what followed. The Free State President had intervened with such effect that Kruger suggested to Colley an armistice and a Royal Commission to settle the dispute. The British Government cabled its approval. But Colley had suffered



more than one reverse, and was determined to win a victory before fighting ceased. He neglected to inform Kruger of the British answer till it was too late to stop the move on which he had resolved. So he was able to lead his men by night to the summit of Majuba Hill which overlooked the Boer positions. On the morning of February 27, 1881, the Boers bravely climbed the hill and drove the defenders from it; Colley himself was among the slain.

The two sides then negotiated the armistice which could have been settled before the battle. Gladstone had opposed the annexation policy from the beginning, and, though he had failed to reverse it in time, he did not feel justified in continuing the war merely for the vindication of military honour. If independence were to be restored anyway, it had better be done without further sacrifice of life and without adding to the existing causes of bitterness.

The Convention of Pretoria did not give the Boers all that they wanted. According to the preamble, they were to have "complete self-government, subject to the suzerainty of Her Majesty". Suzerainty was a vague word, but the articles of the convention gave it some substance. There was to be a British Resident at Pretoria, and all the relations of the Transvaal with foreign states were to be conducted through him and the High Commissioner. In particular, he was to report to the President on cases of ill-treatment of Natives; to report to the High Commissioner on the observance of the convention, and on the encroachment of Transvalers upon Native lands beyond the borders; and to share with the President the responsibility of marking out locations for the Natives within the state. In case of alleged encroachment on Native lands "the decision of the Suzerain will be final". The Resident was to be the only channel of communication between the Transvaal government and Native tribes outside its territory. Laws affecting Natives were not to be valid without Her Majesty's consent.

The reader will not be surprised that the convention carefully and comprehensively specified the debts for which the new government would be responsible, nor that the claims of the Cape Commercial Bank were the first to be named in the list. There were also many administrative details of the transfer

of authority to be provided for. And the restored republic was "hereinafter called the Transvaal State", not the South African Republic. Its boundaries were defined.

The convention combined the two aspects of British policy which Rhodes enthusiastically described as "philanthropy plus five per cent". Though the interest on the debt was actually three and a half per cent, it would have been wiser as well as more practicable to have concentrated entirely on the philanthropy, since the encroachment of the Transvaal on the lands of Native tribes was a danger to the future peace and harmony of South Africa which it was absolutely necessary to check. But the republic was too poor to pay the debt with which it was saddled. The convention had to be modified.

Needless to say, all these events put an end to the confederation scheme. And whereas the various annexations gave an immense impetus to Afrikaner nationalism, as will be shown in another chapter, the abandonment of the Transvaal after Majuba was a bitter humiliation for the whole British population of South Africa. The Boers were filled with contempt for Britain's military power, and were led by their confidence into incautious policies that were factors in a later disaster.

In 1884, on the request of a Transvaal delegation to London, a new convention was substituted for the old. The functions of the Resident were limited to those of a Consul and there was to be no British control over legislation affecting Natives. The debt was pared down. The country was once more called the South African Republic, and its borders were enlarged on the west. It could still make no treaties with foreign Powers—except, now, the Free State—without the consent of Her Majesty; but otherwise the conduct of foreign affairs was in its own hands. The Transvalers wanted to get rid of the "suzerainty". On this there was a compromise. Suzerainty had been mentioned, along with self-government, in the preamble of the old convention. In the new certain articles were substituted for the articles in the old. Did the preamble therefore remain in force? Strictly speaking, a preamble is not part of a law and has no force whatever. But the preamble of the Pretoria Convention was in form not so much a preamble as an un-

numbered article. Lawyers disputed whether it was abrogated in 1884 or not.

On these doubtful terms the South African Republic entered the New Year of 1885, and a new crisis. The two conventions had so hedged the republic about with boundary lines and restrictions on its dealings with Natives that the steady expansion of the past had become impossible. Yet the land-hunger was as great as ever. It was assuaged in a new way. The Transvaal could not expand. But Transvalers could emigrate from their country and colonise on their own responsibility. The Zulu power had been broken and Zululand carved up into thirteen petty chieftainships. In this direction the Boers began to push forward in 1882, and to occupy land on which the New Republic was set up.

On the western frontier the Natives themselves gave them an opportunity. In the Mafeking area two Barolong chiefs, Montsiwa and Moshete, fought. Further south there was a struggle between Mankorwane and Masau. All four called for volunteers and offered lands. Moshete and Masau were assisted by Transvaal Boers, and their rivals asked for British help. The latter were soon defeated and the victors gave out land to their allies. These set up two little republics, "Stellaland" with its capital at Vryburg, and the "Land of Goshen" to the north. They lay right across the Missionaries' Road which had so long been regarded as the route for British trade and influence to the interior.

It was clear that the South African Republic could not annex these states without British permission. To Cecil Rhodes, a member of the Cape Parliament from the newly incorporated Griqualand West, it seemed that the future paramountcy of Britain in southern Africa depended on their annexation to the Cape. He was taking up the torch formerly borne by Moffat, Livingstone, Arnot, Southey and others. But the Cape, with its Dutch vote, was sensitive to Transvaal opinion, and Britain was unwilling to annex.

The London Convention gave a part of the two republics to the Transvaal; but what remained was, as Rhodes said, "the Suez Canal of the interior", "the neck of the bottle". It is impossible to say what would have happened if Britain, the

Cape and the South African Republic had remained the only claimants. The intrusion of a fourth precipitated decisions. The fourth was Germany.

German missionaries and traders had for years operated in the lands on the west coast between the Orange River and Angola. It was a turbulent country in which Bantu tribes, Hottentots and "Bastards" from the Cape Colony perpetually struggled. The slow expansion of the Cape northwards made it appear natural that these territories also—Great Namaqualand and Damaraland—would ultimately fall to her lot. Bismarck had even enquired whether Britain would not undertake to protect German subjects and interests there. But apart from the annexation of Walfisch Bay and the Guano Islands nothing was done.

It must be remembered that in those days the existence of great savage territories which could be penetrated at any convenient time in the future was taken for granted. No one foresaw that the whole of Africa would shortly be partitioned among European powers and that opportunities not seized at once would be for ever lost.

Britain and the Cape allowed time to pass, and were startled when the German flag was run up at Lüderitz Bay in 1883 and the whole of South-West Africa proclaimed a German protectorate the following year. The Germans immediately surveyed a route for a railway to the east. They took an interest in the coasts of Zululand and Pondoland on the other side of the continent. Kruger, after the London Convention, was fêted in Berlin. As the French had once threatened to hem the English colonies to the North American coast, now there appeared the threat of a German belt across Africa to block the expansion of Britain from the Cape.

Under these circumstances the missionary John Mackenzie was sent to Bechuanaland as British Commissioner. Rhodes, who criticised Mackenzie's handling of the situation, was soon sent to take his place. Rhodes was followed by 5000 troops under Sir Charles Warren. But when Warren insulted and antagonised the Boers, Rhodes resigned his post. He wanted the expansion of the Cape with Afrikaner support; Warren proposed to exclude all Dutchmen from the new terri-

tory. Rhodes was critical of the methods and refused to share the responsibility for them; but the primary object of his appeals was attained. Bechuanaland, south of the Molopo River, was proclaimed a Crown Colony; north of that river, and up to 22° South latitude, a British protectorate. The road to the north was now in British hands and the Transvaal nearly encircled.

The Union Jack had already been hoisted at St. Lucia Bay, the only harbour on the coast of Zululand; though it was not till 1887 that the whole of that country was annexed to the British Crown. Thereupon the New Republic, set up in the manner of Stellaland and Goshen by emigrant Boers, was absorbed by the Transvaal. This was cold comfort to Kruger, now President, who had hoped that expansion in that direction would lead him to the sea. He wanted a port in his own or at least in German hands. Except for the narrow sector of Tongaland, Britain now held that coast.

Further south another gap remained. Attempts to extend the authority of the Cape Colony beyond the Kei had been frustrated by orders from London. But the congestion in that region had led to a tribal fight in 1877 which developed into the Ninth Kaffir War, and in the following year provoked a rebellion of the neighbouring Bantu within the Colony. Their suppression was followed by the gradual annexation of all the territory, except Pondoland, up to the borders of Natal. In 1885, while Sir Charles Warren was in Bechuanaland, a British protectorate over the coastline of Pondoland was declared also. So quick and comprehensive was the British response to the intrusion of Bismarck upon the South African scene.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE UITLANDERS

IN January, 1885, a conference was held at Fourteen Streams to discuss the Bechuanaland situation. President Kruger headed the Transvaal delegation. Cecil Rhodes was one of the British representatives. The "Colossus" and the "Lion of Rustenburg" faced each other for the first time.

So long as they lived, these two were to fight a duel which would be the dramatic expression of the whole political struggle of their age. Their personalities made so deep an impression on their followers that South African politics still tend to move along the lines which these men marked out. This has been a great misfortune. There were more beneficial forces at work than those which either of them represented. There were fundamental problems to be solved on which there was no great disagreement between Kruger and Rhodes and to which therefore their conflict made no contribution. Had Brand still been living in the 'nineties—he died in 1888—his influence would probably have changed the course of events immensely for the better. The rest of the story would have been more inspiring, too, if there had been a colossus in the party of Joubert, Schalk Burger, Esselen and Eugene Marais in the Transvaal, or among the Merrimans and Schreiners of the Cape. But these groups produced no one of the stature of Kruger and Rhodes.

Kruger was a product of the Trek and a descendant of trekkers and pastoralists. Rhodes, the son of a Hertfordshire parson, descended from a line of farmers. Both were men of inflexible will and determination. Each fought for the principle of nationality, British or Afrikaner. For that reason each is revered by later generations which cling to their national identity and traditions on either side. Yet neither can be regarded by a cool observer as a representative of the best traits in his national character.

In most ways they were in startling contrast. Kruger

belonged to the Dopper Church, the most rigidly puritanical of Afrikaner sects; he regarded the singing of hymns as wicked levity. He was a Fundamentalist, sought his science in the Bible and believed the world was flat. He was at home in the world of cattle and big game and ox-wagons and farmhouses out of sight of their neighbours' smoke. Rhodes was a millionaire, a diamond magnate who controlled vast corporations with millions of capital. He dreamed of expanding British rule northwards right through the heart of Africa, of a railway from the Cape to Cairo, of consolidating the British Empire and linking it with the United States to dominate the world. He knew that money meant power. There were times when he seems to have thought there was nothing it could not do.

Both, therefore, had serious limitations. But they would not have won the devoted loyalty of thousands without other qualities. Both had great courage. Kruger, for all his puritanism, had a rugged and sometimes grim sense of humour. Rhodes had a gift of attracting not merely the friendship but even the love of men who knew him intimately. It can be said that he pursued wealth not for its own sake but for the political ends it would serve. His own personal tastes were simple. Yet money corrupts. Neither Rhodes nor Kruger had a lofty or discriminating sense of honour. Yet both were great men. Kruger, himself a child of the Great Trek, personified the spirit of that movement, its strength as well as its weakness, its passion for freedom as well as its narrow isolationism. Rhodes not only gave to British South Africans an inspiring vision of their rôle in history, but, except for one short lapse, kept them consistently to the path of co-operation with their Afrikaner countrymen. His statesmanship rose far beyond the chauvinism which the Jameson Raid has caused to be associated with his name. His friendship with Hofmeyr was one of the great forces drawing the two nationalities together.

Rhodes had come to Natal in his youth to improve his health. The diamond fields soon attracted him and he made a fortune. That enabled him to go to Oxford for a pass degree; he attended to his mining interests at the same time as his studies. Returning to Kimberley, he found mining operations

at a critical stage. So long as diamonds were to be scratched from the surface of the ground, every digger could attend to the few square feet of his own claim. But the busy throng on the surface disappeared from view as a great hole sank into the earth. Roadways between the claims fell in and the sides of the hole collapsed on to the diggers below. Claims had to be amalgamated. Rhodes proved his financial genius in his response to this challenge. He formed a company which controlled a whole mine; he defeated rival amalgamators and by 1890 his De Beers Consolidated Mines, Ltd., had united the whole of the South African diamond industry into one concern. Its property was worth £14,000,000 and it controlled the diamond market of the world. Big Business made its first appearance on the South African scene since the fall of the Dutch East India Company.

By that time Rhodes had used De Beers to promote the British South Africa Company, of which he was Managing Director in South Africa. It received an imperial charter and became the means of colonising and conquering Rhodesia. That story lies outside the scope of this book, but it had repercussions on the countries to the south. The Pioneer Column entered Mashonaland in 1890; in the same year Rhodes became Prime Minister of the Cape.

He had, by then, his finger in another pie also. Since the days of the first diamond discoveries, gold was known to exist in the Transvaal. Mines were developed, principally in the eastern districts. In 1886 prospectors on the bleak uplands south of Pretoria, the Witwatersrand, discovered what proved to be the greatest goldfield in the world.

From Kimberley and elsewhere miners and financiers came to see. The galvanised iron shanties of the new mining camp of Johannesburg were the beginnings of a miraculous growth. Within a decade the town had 100,000 inhabitants. Along the line of reef, over a length of sixty miles, smaller towns grew up beside the mines. By 1895 it was known that this would not be an ephemeral gold-rush camp. The reef seemed inexhaustible and could be mined at deep levels. It had two distinguishing characteristics. The gold was very thinly distributed in the rock and it was very evenly distributed. There were no nuggets to



make a digger rich overnight. The extraction was difficult and required expensive machinery. But since the reef was so uniform and reliable, and labour cheap, the investment of big capital in the mines, which the difficulties made necessary, was not unduly risky. The Rand was obviously a field for the experienced financiers of Kimberley.

Rhodes was one of these, but not the most important. His company, the Consolidated Goldfields of South Africa, gave him a share in the new wealth and a connection with Transvaal politics. But in Johannesburg even greater interests were represented by J. B. Robinson, Lionel Phillips, and others.

Rhodes was in a position which made it almost if not quite impossible to reconcile his various duties and interests. He was responsible for the Cape government, De Beers, the Consolidated Goldfields, the Chartered Company and Rhodesia. As is the way with financial magnates, he used one of these rôles to ease his task in another.

His greatest single objective was the unification of South Africa under the British flag. Here he was following in the footsteps of Grey and Carnarvon. He rightly regarded the South African Republic as the chief obstacle in the way of this achievement. Kruger would have union on his own terms—the absorption of the rest of the sub-continent by his own state—but on no others. It was not for nothing that the Transvaal was called the South African Republic. The name was calculated, like that of the Soviet Union in later times, to smooth the way for the annexation of neighbouring states.

Before 1886 Kruger was in a poor bargaining position. He had even suggested a customs union with the Cape, a proposal which was turned down and was not to be repeated after the gold discoveries. Kruger, like every Transvaler since the days of Louis Trigardt, thought that the independence of his country would not be secure without a seaport of its own. The annexation of the New Republic, on the way to the sea, had been accompanied by a British annexation of Zululand. There still remained one small stretch of available coast—Tongaland, just south of the Portuguese border. Between this and the Transvaal High Veld lay the turbulent region of Swaziland,

whose independence was guaranteed by the London Convention. Three times, between 1890 and 1895, Kruger negotiated with the British over Swaziland. The first time he had a good card to play. One of his burghers had got a concession from the Matabele Chief Lobengula. This came at the moment when Rhodes was preparing to send his Pioneer Column to Mashonaland on the strength of another of Lobengula's concessions. Kruger was prepared to hold back his men at the Limpopo if he could have a *quid pro quo* on the east. What he got was a joint Anglo-Transvaal administration of Swaziland, and the right to a corridor to the sea, provided the Transvaal joined the Customs Union which the Cape and the Free State had just formed. The price was considered too heavy and the Volksraad never fulfilled the terms of this arrangement. When the republic was finally permitted to declare a protectorate over Swaziland, Kruger had just made a speech in which he announced that Germany could be called in to counterbalance British power in South Africa. Britain therefore annexed Tongaland and the Transvaal was finally cut off from the sea.

There could be no Transvaal port and no German port. The remaining alternative was Portuguese. Railway connection with Delagoa Bay would free the republic from dependence on British colonial ports. Even in the days of President Burgers this railway had been a favourite republican scheme. The presence of the tsetse fly in the low country made ox-wagon traffic to Lourenço Marques impossible. But the funds for a railway could never be raised before gold came to strengthen Transvaal credit. Then the Dutch and German financiers came forward with alacrity.

The Netherlands South African Railway Company, which was given a monopoly of Transvaal railway connections with other states, was floated in Holland. Dutch subscribers provided 29 per cent of the capital but kept to themselves more than two-thirds of the voting power. A greater number of shares was held by the republic itself, and a much greater number in Germany.

Kruger did what he could to prevent the Cape and Natal railways crossing his border before the Delagoa Bay line was

completed. Long before any through connection was established it was necessary to build a line along the Rand to link the mines with their source of coal at Springs. The Railway Company was later able to boast that the traffic on this short line paid the interest on the construction of its whole system. In return for a railway loan Kruger allowed the main line from Port Elizabeth, which ran through the Free State to Viljoen's Drift, to be continued to the Rand. This was in 1892. It was not till two and three years later that the connections with Delagoa Bay and Natal were complete.

The railway company was the object of bitter attacks, and not only by the mining magnates. It was complained that construction was three times as expensive as it need have been; that the company provided "jobs for pals" and lucrative contracts for subsidiaries; that the Komati bridge, in the midst of country abounding in stone, was made of stone imported from Holland—of all countries! The company's profits were greater than its working expenses, and its dividends ten per cent and more. It was allowed to collect the customs duties on the Portuguese border and keep them for itself.

Recent investigations have taken much of the sting out of these and other charges. The construction of the line through difficult and unhealthy country from Komatipoort to the High Veld was necessarily expensive, and it was this line that Kruger very naturally regarded as a political necessity. The capital was difficult to raise in Europe; most of it had to be loan and not share capital, and the profits on the Rand line had necessarily to compensate for the expense of the route to Delagoa Bay. As for the Komati bridge, the local stone was unsuitable and the means to work it were lacking on the spot. Nor could personnel be recruited locally. The collection of customs duties was a consequence of the republic's guarantee of minimum profits to the company.

From the point of view of the foreign population on the Rand, these considerations were irrelevant. If the Cape Government Railways could provide, for whatever reasons, cheaper communication with the outside world, the Rand consumers saw no necessity for the Netherlands Company at all. Its tariffs were much heavier than those on the Cape

railways. The latter cut their rates so as to capture the Rand traffic. It became cheaper to bring goods from the Cape to the Rand than over the much shorter line from Lourenço Marques. The company, to keep the traffic to its own routes, therefore trebled the rates on its short line from the Free State border to Johannesburg. The people concerned tried to escape this charge by unloading goods at Viljoen's Drift, on the Free State side of the Vaal, and bringing them to the Rand by wagon. Kruger then closed the drifts (fords) over the river to this traffic. But he had gone too far. A firm stand by the British government made him retreat. And he had united the Free Staters, the Cape Colonists (Dutch and English) and Great Britain against him.

There were many grounds besides its railway policy on which the Transvaal régime could be criticised. Monopolies were granted to favoured people. The dynamite monopoly, of vital concern to the mines, caused the price of dynamite to be three times as high as it would have been with free importation. This monopoly cost the mines £600,000 a year. Legal quibbles were used to deprive the mining companies of property and bring profit to officials and their friends. Eugene Marais, editor of *Land en Volk*, regularly exposed cases of bribery and challenged the people he named to sue him for libel. They never did so with success. One member of the Executive, who had supported the dynamite concession, was said to draw £10,000 a year from it thereafter for his pains. In connection with the Selati railway concession bribes were distributed to officials and legislators, and the President said he saw no harm in it.

Laws were passed with retroactive effect. When a Field-Cornet was convicted of ill-treating a Native the government paid his fine. Taxes were specially devised to fall mainly upon the Uitlander (foreign) population, which claimed that it contributed at least nine-tenths of the public revenue. In the critical years before the Boer War the Chief Justice claimed the right to test the constitutionality of laws, and for this he was dismissed.

The Uitlanders thus had serious grievances. They hoped to qualify for Transvaal citizenship and elect representatives who

would redress them. The frustration of this hope produced the greatest grievance of all. It had formerly been very easy to become a burgher in the Transvaal, as it continued to be in the Free State. But the sudden influx of a large alien population produced a change. The naturalisation and franchise laws were tightened up. Petitions by many thousands of people, asking for easier terms, were treated with scorn and derision by President and Volksraad. One legislator challenged the foreigners to fight for the vote. At last it became impossible for an immigrant to get it till he had been fourteen years in the republic, twelve years a naturalised subject (having lost his previous nationality) and at least forty years old; and even then he would not vote in presidential elections. In effect, citizenship was impossible to acquire, though the government could always grant it to any favoured person.

Most of the aliens were British subjects, though there were many Germans and Americans. Of the British, a good many came from the Cape Colony and Natal. These felt their exclusion from political rights much more bitterly than the others. The great capitalists "did not care a fig for the franchise" (they preferred working with "electoral funds"), but the bulk of the immigrants, intending to make permanent homes on the Rand, were very serious in demanding it. Moreover, while denied the rights of citizenship, they were expected to shoulder its obligations. When some of them, called up for military service, refused to go, this was treated as evidence of their unfitness for the franchise.

Now consider Kruger's case. His people had won the Transvaal with blood and tears. They had moved great distances and made great sacrifices to find a country where they could be themselves and preserve their way of life. Now they were suddenly invaded by a horde of cosmopolitan fortune-seekers whose outlook and civilisation were poles apart from their own. In a few years the newcomers outnumbered the old burghers by two to one. If he gave them the vote, Kruger said, he might as well haul down the republican *Vierkleur*.

One of the Uitlanders' demands was for state support for English-medium schools. This was an inconsiderate demand,

since the preservation of the Dutch character of the state was a fundamental condition of its existence. It was reasonable to expect new citizens to conform to this character. As for paying nine-tenths of the taxes and having no representatives, Kruger's attitude was bluff and logical: if they didn't like it, they could go. If they stayed, he might take that as a sign that they were doing well enough.

The mining companies were not doing badly, but it must be remembered that the really significant grievances were those of the rank and file of the Uitlander population. These formed the Transvaal National Union to demand redress of all their grievances. It is significant that the successive chairmen of this Union were South Africans by birth. So had Arnot, Shepstone and many other leading "imperialists" been. Of the Englishmen who played political parts in South Africa, those most responsible for British expansion and a firm line with the republics were commonly men who closely identified themselves with the British colonists. The struggle was as much between rival groups in South Africa itself, as between the Afrikaners and the British government.

The demands of the National Union fell on deaf ears. Feelings were embittered by folly on both sides. The republican flag was torn down and trampled on by a Johannesburg mob. Kruger spoke of the Uitlanders in rough and sometimes unprintable terms. "Go back and tell your people," he said to a deputation, "I shall never give them anything: I shall never change my policy, and now let the storm burst."

It did. The National Union began to organise a revolution, and Rhodes took a hand in it; partly, it has been said, because he was disappointed in his hopes of a "New Rand" in Rhodesia, and wanted to bend the old Rand to his purposes. Many successful revolutions have had less justification than this one. Though the old Boer patriarchs, struggling to preserve what was dear to them, may win our sympathy, their case was weak. The wise conservative achieves something by making concessions to the spirit and needs of a new time. The late nineteenth century was not a time in which two-thirds of the people of a country (not counting Natives, whom all disregarded), paying nine-tenths of its taxes and owning a third of its land, could be kept

indefinitely in a state of subjection. When it is remembered that the rulers were a simple people unversed in the ways of the world, and that the subjects could enlist the support of what was still the greatest of the Great Powers, Kruger's obstinacy seems still more foolish. If he were to preserve the old Transvaal unchanged, his only logical course was to follow the methods of Afghanistan or old Japan. He should have put up a notice at the Vaal River like that on the Khyber Pass, which says, "It is absolutely forbidden to cross this frontier." But the London Convention forbade this; and if it had been done, the state revenue would not have multiplied twenty times in ten years.

Plotting therefore began in Johannesburg. Rifles and machine-guns were smuggled in under loads of coke or concealed in oil-drums with oil dripping deceptively from the taps. Most of these loads came from the sidings of De Beers Consolidated at Kimberley. There was a plan to seize the arsenal in Pretoria. Would the revolution be a purely domestic one, or carried out under the British banner, with a demand for British annexation? The plotters were so divided on this point that at the last moment they postponed "flotation of company", as it was called in their cryptic telegrams, and the movement seemed to have fizzled out. Quite apart from divisions in the ranks of the "shareholders", they had not nearly enough arms or ammunition for their purpose.

But on the hot afternoon of December 30, 1895, when the leading conspirators were gathered together, they received a telegram which made their blood run cold. It read: "The contractor has started on the earthworks with seven hundred boys; hopes to reach terminus on Wednesday." Thus was announced a "flotation" for which the subscribers wanted no responsibility and which would bring some of them within sight of the gallows.

The contractor was Dr. Jameson, intimate friend of Rhodes and Administrator of Rhodesia. He had been brought into the conspiracy because it was thought necessary to have support from outside the Transvaal to make sure of success. The Chartered Company was then building a railway from Mafeking to Bulawayo. On this excuse Rhodes got the Colonial Office to transfer to the Company's administration a "railway strip"

through the Bechuanaland Protectorate. Down this strip Jameson brought a force of Mashonaland Mounted Police, and encamped them at a spot on the Transvaal border not far north of Mafeking. It was, of course, for this purpose that the Company had acquired the conveniently placed railway strip.

Rhodes and the Johannesburg plotters had provided this force in order to give outside support if anything should go wrong with the revolution. Jameson was given an undated letter from the leaders in Johannesburg calling him to come in to save their women and children from the Boers. When it appeared that the revolutionaries were divided in their aims and insufficiently armed, they sent two messengers as well as telegrams to Jameson to "postpone ilotation". All the messages reached him. Rhodes, too, tried to stop him, though his telegram arrived too late. But Rhodes had once said to another officer: "You cannot expect a Prime Minister to write down that you are to seize ports, etc. But when he gives you orders to the contrary, *disobey them*." He reaped the bitter fruit of this seed when Jameson disobeyed the explicit orders reaching him from all sides.

Two years earlier, Jameson had fought a war with the Matabele and added their territory to that of Mashonaland. Because of the new weapon, the machine-gun, the war was a walk-over. Jameson became too confident. He had, too, been reading Macaulay's essay on Clive. "You may say what you like," he said, "but Clive would have done it."

Fortified by these thoughts he led his band across the Transvaal border and made a dash for Johannesburg. The Boers were quite capable of handling this sort of situation. Their Commandos assembled with great speed and stood between the invader and his goal. The High Commissioner, on hearing the news, repudiated Jameson's action and sent a messenger to order him back. The order was disobeyed. On the fourth day Jameson was trapped. When further resistance was hopeless, a white apron was seized from a Native woman and hoisted in sign of surrender. The same night the invaders were all lodged in Pretoria gaol.

De Kiewiet says of the Raid that "it was inexcusable in its folly and unforgivable in its consequences". No one would now



question this judgment. The folly was so great as to be almost unbelievable. A British force, operating from British territory, invaded a country with which the Queen was at peace. It did not do so in sufficient strength to have any chance of success. The Raid was supposed to assist a revolution organised in Johannesburg, yet the revolutionaries had given Jameson the most emphatic orders not to move.

It was pointed out at the time that the Transvalers under Pretorius had conducted an almost exactly analogous raid into the Free State in 1857. Kruger had been one of the invaders, though he had not approved of the policy. He used his influence to avert hostilities and cause a withdrawal of the Transvalers. The analogy is significant, but it does not excuse Jameson's crime.

The leaders of the movement in Johannesburg were compromised. Sixty-four of them were arrested. Of these, four were condemned to death. But although a patriot chose this moment to bring from Somerset East to Pretoria no less an historical relic than the beam from which the Slagter's Nek rebels had been hanged, the penalty was commuted to a fine of £25,000 each. Rhodes and his friend Beit paid on behalf of the prisoners. The others were punished by imprisonment for which also a fine was substituted. With great wisdom Kruger handed Jameson and his raiders over to the British Government for trial. They got very light sentences.

A committee of the House of Commons and another of the Cape House of Assembly enquired into the responsibility for the Raid. Some members of the London Committee believed that Joseph Chamberlain, then Colonial Secretary, was implicated, but they failed to prove it. Subsequent evidence has shown that he knew of the contemplated rising and did not discourage it. He certainly knew nothing about the Raid. So the blame must fall mainly on Rhodes. He encouraged and financed the movement, yet failed to control the people he had stirred up. He had so often supported irregular political and military proceedings that Jameson might naturally suppose he would support this one.

Of the consequences of the Raid, direct and indirect, we have not yet seen the end. The immediate results were serious

enough. The Kaiser sent Kruger a congratulatory telegram which began the estrangement of Britain from Germany. Rhodes parted company from Hofmeyr and most of his Afrikaner friends (this was a revolution in Cape politics), resigned his Premiership and his seat on the board of the Chartered Company. A stop-gap ministry took office in the Cape Colony, where Briton and Afrikaner drew apart in hatred and suspicion. Many of the British colonists, of whom Merriman was the outstanding representative, felt that their flag had been besmirched by the underhand dealings of Rhodes and Jameson. Others thought that the Uitlanders on the Rand, by failing to rise, had betrayed Jameson and his brave boys. J. C. Smuts, a young Cape advocate just back from Cambridge, abandoned his British nationality in disgust and settled in the Transvaal, where he was soon to become State Attorney. The Free State turned its back on the Cape and formed a defensive alliance with its republican neighbour. Up in Rhodesia the Matabele, followed by the Mashona, took advantage of the absence of the police to rise in rebellion. Rhodes himself played a brave and dramatic part in the pacification. In the Transvaal there had been, among the old burghers themselves, considerable opposition to Kruger. This was now almost silenced, and the president was re-elected for a fourth term in 1898. For a century there had been suspicion of British motives and fear of British treachery. The suspicion and fear seemed now to be confirmed beyond a shadow of doubt, and all the earlier policies of Britain were thrown into darker relief. Even Natal drew apart from the Cape. The Garden Colony had received responsible government in 1893, and now wished to take advantage of its low customs tariff to trade with the Transvaal. Throughout South Africa there were fear, bitterness, recrimination and broken friendships.

What did the future hold? In less than four years from the Raid the British Empire and the Republics were at war. One asks whether the war was inevitable. Underlying its immediate occasions there appeared to be a fundamental antagonism. There were some resemblances to the Civil War in America. Britain, like the American Union, represented a modern industrial civilisation; the republics, like the Confederacy, an

antiquated and static rural society. Was there an "irrepressible conflict" between them? The American conflict came because both sides shared a common country, and the national policy had to take one line or another. But South Africa was not one country. Could the separate parts not agree to differ? They could not, because the conflict was not in essence a difference of policy between different states; it was a struggle for supremacy within one state. The conflict was irrepressible; but that is not to say that it had inevitably to be resolved by war.

Within the Transvaal two different civilisations came to grips. Their quarrels related to every aspect of the state's affairs: taxation, railway and customs policies, monopolies, police, the administration of justice, the method of legislation, the official language, education. There can be no doubt that the Uitlanders, if enfranchised, would never have been content till these questions were settled to their own satisfaction. Such a change would have destroyed the republic of the Boers, whether the Vierkleur continued to wave or not. Therefore the old burghers were determined to prevent it. Their attitude was as natural as that of their opponents; but which side was right? The best answer is perhaps that the Boers were supported by the letter of the law, but the Uitlanders by the principles of historical development and by every historical analogy.

It was assumed that Kruger would not make any concessions on the mere demand of the Uitlanders. "I shall never give them anything." Most of them, being British subjects, then naturally turned to Britain for assistance. Had Britain either the right or the duty to interfere? Her right to do so depended partly on the articles of 1884, partly on the disputed "suzerainty". But the articles of the Convention did not cover the case, and nobody could say what suzerainty meant. The problem seemed insoluble in theory; but in April, 1899, it became a question of practical politics, and a solution had to be found. Some 20,000 Uitlanders petitioned the Queen for protection. It must be borne in mind that the actions of the British government were being anxiously watched not only in the Cape Colony and Natal, but in Canada and Australasia. British colonists regarded this as a test case which would show whether their attachment to the Empire guaranteed to them the Mother

Country's protection or not; whether Palmerston's *Civis Britannicus sum* was a sham or a reality.

As a matter of practical politics, Britain's disregard of the Uitlanders' petition might have cost her the loyalty of thousands of her own people; so that Kruger would have had it both ways. On the moral side there is a point of vital importance to be remembered. Up to August, 1899, every Transvaal proposal on the subject of the franchise contained a curious provision. There was to be a long interval between the Uitlander's naturalisation and his getting the right to vote. During this time—it was twelve years by the existing law—he could have no voice in the affairs of his adopted country and would have cut himself off from the country of his birth. Had it not been for this circumstance the Uitlander might have chosen one allegiance or the other and been expected to abide by his decision. But in fact there were no alternatives: he must be protected by his native country or not at all. World opinion today would not admit that a law-abiding person ought to renounce the privileges of one nationality without gaining those of another; nor did this seem right in 1899.

Chamberlain therefore took up the cudgels for the Uitlanders. A new High Commissioner, Sir Alfred Milner, took the initiative appropriate to the "man on the spot", but worked in harmony with the Colonial Secretary. Milner believed that, as long as it remained united, the British Empire was the mainstay of peace and freedom in the world, and that South Africa was a vital link in the chain that held it together. That meant that the British and those Afrikaners who were willing to share this allegiance to the Crown must be the dominant element in South Africa, not Kruger's republicans. For the task in hand he had all the qualities of a first-rate civil servant, but by temperament and training he was more an administrator than a diplomatist. But, since neither he nor Chamberlain thought war to be inevitable at this stage, they had agreed to make the most of diplomacy first. Their principal aim was to get a reasonable franchise for the Uitlanders, after which Britain would accept no further responsibility for them. Milner met Kruger at the Bloemfontein Conference and this question was stiffly discussed. No agreement was reached.

In the Transvaal an important change of personnel had taken place. Several of the Hollanders whom Kruger had placed in the highest executive posts were removed and their places taken by Afrikaners. J. C. Smuts, the young advocate from the Cape Colony, became State Attorney, and F. W. Reitz, ex-President of the Free State, became State Secretary. These men brought a more realistic and progressive spirit into the negotiations, and they were helped by outside influences that were brought to bear on the President. Sir Henry de Villiers and J. H. Hofmeyr came up from the Cape to counsel moderation. The result was a change in Transvaal policy which put a very different complexion on the whole dispute.

A new dispatch from Reitz offered a five years' franchise which was to be retrospective; the price demanded was the tacit abandonment of the British claim to suzerainty, and no further interference in the internal affairs of the republic. Any remaining points in dispute could be settled by arbitration in which the Transvaal would not ask that foreign Powers should take part. Chamberlain saw several snags in this offer. The South African Republic had often repealed laws by the simple process of a resolution passed by the Volksraad at a single sitting. And its previous franchise laws and proposals had been hedged about by administrative complications which took back with one hand what had been given with the other. Britain could not pay the price asked unless the concession were to be effective and permanent. But Chamberlain's despatch, which he afterwards described as a "qualified acceptance", was so tactlessly and obscurely worded as to make it seem like a refusal. The Transvaal thereupon withdrew its offer. If the despatch had been worded as a clear acceptance, and the necessary qualifications tactfully introduced, there might have been no war. Chamberlain had had the power to prevent it. Kruger's régime would have been undermined from within, but that would have worried nobody but his own clique.

This possibility was even closer to the Uitlanders' grasp before the Raid. At that time most of South Africa was hostile to Kruger. Had the Uitlanders waited, and Jameson never left Rhodesia, Kruger was likely to lose the next presidential

election as well as control of the Volksraad. The margin would not have been great, but the victors would have regarded Kruger's party as their main enemy, and this would have been a strong inducement to add Uitlanders to the electorate. After the Raid even the "liberal" Boer leaders, Joubert and Burger, were very chary of concessions. In 1895, and again in August, 1899, there was a prospect of a peaceful solution. But it must be repeated that the overthrow of the narrow oligarchy of the republic was the essence of that solution. Given the forces that were at work, the old régime could never have survived in peace. But its overthrow by peaceful means would have had very different results from its going down in a blaze of patriotic glory before superior force.

After the misunderstanding of August the continued interchange of despatches served little purpose. Both sides had to prepare for the possibility of a breakdown. Milner had ceased to believe in the possibility of peace; and, since he thought that war would bring about the unification of all South Africa under the British flag, he was ready to face it. Maybe his full, clearly argued, despatches stiffened Chamberlain. But several Boer writers have believed that Kruger's intransigence was also to blame. "The only *casus belli*," Lord Bryce wrote, "has been the conduct of the two contending parties during a negotiation, the professed subject of which was in no sense a *casus belli*." In the end the guns went off almost of themselves.

Kruger had been buying German artillery and building fortifications ever since the Raid. Britain now ordered troops from India and the Mediterranean to Durban, and prepared to despatch an army corps. Republican commandos assembled on the Natal border, within sight of Majuba. British troops were held back from the borders, but the shadow of that mountain still fell across the whole British army.

If there was to be war, the only chance for the republics—the Free State stood by her ally—was to start it before the British forces had arrived in strength. Reitz therefore despatched an ultimatum: all troops on the borders of the republic to be withdrawn; troops that had arrived in South Africa since June 1 to leave the country; troops now on the high seas not to

land. Chamberlain replied that the conditions 'are such as Her Majesty's Government deem it impossible to discuss'. On October 11 the Boer War—to the Boers the Second Freedom War—began.

Very serious mistakes of strategy were made on both sides, but as the chances of a Boer victory depended on rapid success their mistakes were fatal; time was on the side of the British. In the whole course of the war the British Empire mobilised 448,000 men, the Republics about 87,000. But on the day hostilities began the Boer forces outnumbered their opponents in South Africa by two to one. As the Afrikaners of the Cape were in sympathy with the Republics, the correct strategy for the latter was to overrun that colony as quickly as possible and to draw its rural population into rebellion. This could probably have been done, and Britain would have faced the task of reconquering almost the whole of South Africa. That it was not done was partly due to historical tradition. The urge towards the sea, the memories of the loss of Natal in 1843 and of the victory of Majuba, drew the main Transvaal force into the Garden Colony. And the British offensive was expected from that direction. But even this policy was not part of an overall strategy. There was no unified command for the two republics, and in each army the local commanders tended to make their own strategic decisions. On the western front the principal Boer forces, on their own local responsibility, undertook to besiege Kimberley and Mafeking. When the British in Natal fell back to Ladysmith, Joubert (the Transvaal Commandant-General) insisted on sitting down to a siege of that town instead of making a bold dash for Durban.

For a time the Boers retained the initiative, forcing their opponents to attend to the relief of the besieged towns. The British commander allowed his policy to be dictated by the enemy. Where a competent general would have concentrated his limited forces for victory at one decisive point, Sir Redvers Buller dispersed his men all over the front. The result was "Black Week" in mid-December: Methuen, advancing to the relief of Kimberley, was defeated at Magersfontein; Gatacre was thrown back from Stormberg by Free Staters invading the Colony; Buller himself, facing the main Boer army along the

Tugela in Natal, suffered at Colenso the defeat which proved him as bad a tactician as a strategist.

These experiences roused the British people to a sense of the magnitude of their task. Reinforcements were sent with despatch and Lord Roberts came out as Commander-in-Chief, with Kitchener as Chief of Staff. Canada and Australia made their contribution. That Roberts directed his attention first to the relief of Kimberley was partly due to the insistence of Rhodes, who was in that town constantly bickering with the military commander. But from the moment of its relief the initiative passed to Roberts. The Free Staters under Cronje were too reluctant to abandon what they had wrongly made their principal objective, and too slow in getting away from the neighbourhood. Roberts pursued Cronje, surrounded him and his 4000 men at Paardeberg, and there on February 27—the anniversary of Majuba—Cronje surrendered.

From that point events followed rapidly and logically. The Free Staters who were helping to besiege Ladysmith immediately abandoned their positions and crossed the mountains to defend their homes, with the result that Ladysmith was relieved and the Transvaalers had to abandon Natal. In the Free State itself there were panic and demoralisation which gave Roberts the road to Bloemfontein. Though the sickness and exhaustion of the troops caused a long pause at Bloemfontein, when the advance was resumed it brought the Tommies rapidly to Johannesburg.

Louis Botha had become Commandant-General after the death of Joubert. It was he who frustrated an attempt by some Boers to destroy the gold mines before the arrival of the British. Johannesburg was intact, though almost deserted, when it fell into their hands. The Boer leaders, to the disgust of their followers, decided also not to defend Pretoria. Kruger and his administration retired down the Delagoa Bay railway, and the British marched into the capital past the forts that had been built at great expense against this very contingency.

The Free State was annexed under the title of the Orange River Colony. When Kruger had crossed the Portuguese frontier and the British entered Komatipoort the Transvaal, too, was annexed, and Roberts thought the war was over. Yet



only eleven months had passed, and it was to last two and a half years altogether.

The first phase had seen a British victory in the field and the acquisition of two new colonies. But the second phase, the guerrilla war, was to be still more important in its ultimate effects. One of the principle reasons for the British success had been the excellent discipline of the regular troops and the indiscipline of the Boers. Their armies were a reflection of their social system. The officers were elected and were treated as equals by their men. Every man had his own views on tactics and felt himself free to disobey orders which did not accord with them. When he thought it time to go home on leave he waited not upon the order of his going. There was one rank, that of General, which had been instituted at the beginning of the war and went by appointment and not election. When this rank was conferred the new officer would debate in his own mind, or even with his subordinates, whether to accept it or not.

These, however, were but the defects of the Boer's qualities. When large-scale operations ceased and commandos broke up, every man was prepared to take responsibility and show initiative, whereas the British soldier was too often helpless without orders. In the second half of 1900, when Roberts went home and left Kitchener in command, this reversal of the situation became apparent. All over the former republics guerrilla bands were active. Their operations continued throughout 1901 and into the next year. All this time the governments of the republics remained in being, though chased from pillar to post over the wide spaces of the High Veld.

This indefinite prolongation of the war led the British into policies which have had lasting consequences. Along every railway line stretched continuous barbed wire, with blockhouses sometimes only 200 yards apart. This was to divide the country into compartments which could be cleared one at a time. The Boer commandos met this threat with great daring and resource. They often crossed the lines, but always with difficulty. When closely pursued, they melted away, only to rejoin their commandos when the danger had passed. Every farmhouse provided them with supplies and intelligence. It is to be noted how this was a consequence of the racial difference

between town and country. Had the Boers lived on the Rand and the British on the veld, the capture of a few centres would of course have ended the war. But *Boer* means *farmer*. How was Kitchener to defeat this semi-civilian army which wore no uniform (except, when its clothes wore out, captured British uniforms) and was supported by the civilians of the farms? It is significant that Kitchener, who favoured reconciliation and easy peace terms, was responsible for a harsh policy which he justified by military necessity; whereas Milner, who preferred unconditional surrender and subjugation, thought Kitchener's policy a mistake for political reasons. Military considerations were allowed to carry more weight at the time.

The policy followed was to destroy all farms that might be suspected of giving aid and comfort to the enemy. But it was carried out indiscriminately, so that by the end of the war there was hardly a farmhouse left standing in the annexed territories. Buildings and their contents went up in flames, stock was driven away, standing crops destroyed, and the troops encouraged to loot. What was to become of the women and children whose homes were destroyed? Camps were prepared to receive them, "concentration camps", an institution that had recently become notorious in Cuba. Some, though a minority, of the women and children sought these camps voluntarily as places of refuge. Most were brought to them under compulsion. Large numbers of farm Natives, too, were taken to them—a fact almost completely forgotten in later controversies. Since the farms and their inhabitants were supporting the burghers in the field, the policy of concentration in camps was justifiable from a military point of view. The policy itself may even be called humane. When peace came, Botha was to thank Kitchener for the care that had been taken of the women and children. President Steyn, who wanted to continue the war, supported his opinion by pointing out to the burghers that their dependants were in safety and would not be made to suffer by further military operations.

The farm-burning was much less defensible. It is true that the combatants drew supplies from the farms, but the destruction of the houses and their contents was quite a different matter from the burning of crops and the removal of stock.

The burning of houses and the wrecking of pianos was meant as a deterrent punishment. In that object it failed completely. It is arguable that if the farms had been left alone, and the combatant burghers had been responsible for the women and children within their lines, they would have given in sooner.

So much for the policy itself. What damns it, however, is not so much its conception as its execution. Farms were destroyed before many questions were asked. People were poured into concentration camps that were not ready to receive them. There was a shortage of beds, of food, of sanitary and medical facilities. It is true that many of the women had the most primitive ideas of medicine and hygiene, but that does not relieve the military authorities of their responsibility. In all the camps together the deaths in October, 1901, reached a rate equal to 344 per thousand per annum. The child mortality was much worse, in some camps reaching and surpassing the rate which, if continued throughout the year, would have extinguished the whole child population.

Some camps were in a much better condition than others, and the efforts of Emily Hobhouse, who came from England to probe into this unhappy subject, were effective in bringing about an ultimate improvement everywhere. But by the end the concentration camps had been the deathbeds of some 26,000 Boer women and children. They form the last and the most terrible item in the indictment against England that remains indelibly printed on many Afrikaner minds.

But this memory is not the only enduring relic of the guerrilla war. National sentiment is not felt with equal intensity by all the people of any country, and in a mixed community it appears in a complicated shape. There were people of British birth or descent who had become loyal citizens of the republics, especially of the Free State. These fought devotedly and even fanatically for the countries of their adoption. Judge Hertzog, who became a Free State General, was so moved by this that he never afterwards felt any hostility towards people of British origin as such; but he expected of them a political attitude which had no meaning whatever for the great majority of British South Africans, and much misunderstanding and confusion was to follow.

In the Cape Colony there were people of Dutch descent, Afrikaans-speaking, who fought loyally for the British. Others of the same group rebelled against their government and gave either political support or active military assistance to the republics. Blood, they said, was thicker than water. Finally there were the Uitlanders who fled from the Rand before the outbreak of war, formed the Imperial Light Horse and other units, and fought with especial bitterness against the Boers. All these were men who took their stand on a principle from the beginning and gave their allegiance where they thought it due.

There were others in a more compromising position. When the Boer resistance seemed to have collapsed many citizens of the republics surrendered to the British and took an oath of neutrality. Some of these afterwards rejoined the commandos in the field. The British treated them as oath-breakers; the Boers held that the British, by pressing these men for information of Boer movements and otherwise demanding their support, had failed to respect their neutrality and had therefore released them from the oath. Others who surrendered—"hands-uppers"—thought the continued resistance madness and felt that the "bitter-enders" would be responsible for the ruin of their country. Some even offered active support to the British and were enrolled in an organisation called the National Scouts. Some formed a Peace Committee to spread peace propaganda among the men who still fought. The Chairman of the committee ventured into the Boer lines, was arrested, tried as a traitor, and shot. Though the words "Quisling" and "collaborationist" could not be used, they correctly describe the "hands-uppers" and National Scouts as seen through the eyes of the "bitter-enders".

This division of Afrikanerdom gave rise to various hopes and fears. Had the war lasted much longer, and had it been possible to build up political institutions before the peace came, the collaborationists might have become the leaders of an Afrikaner people that had broken its ties with the commandos and the memory of the republics. The "bitter-enders" would have hung about the fringe of politics, outside its main stream. This was Milner's hope.

Kitchener, a soldier, felt more respect and sympathy for

the men who fought him to the end. He wanted the guerrilla war to stop. In April, 1902, he gave permission for the leaders of the two republics to meet at Klerksdorp. Out of their discussions arose a negotiation with the British authorities. The Boers insisted on independence. Chamberlain insisted that the annexations must stand. The Boer leaders believed that they had no power to accept this condition, which only the sovereign people could do. Representatives elected by the commandos, and regarded as representing the people as a whole, then met at Vereeniging. Among the Transvalers the prevailing opinion was for peace. The Free Staters were bitterly resentful. They had espoused a quarrel which was no concern of theirs, and now the principals in the dispute asked them to abandon their independence. Behind this argument lay the fact that the Free State would remain Afrikaner whatever happened, whereas the Transvaal was with every month of the war falling more into the hands of the English and the "hands-uppers". Of the Free State leaders, only President Steyn resisted to the last. Generals Hertzog and De Wet came round to the Transvaal point of view represented by Botha and Smuts. The Peace of Vereeniging was signed on May 31, 1902.

Thus the leaders in the field had made a great personal sacrifice to save their nation from collapse. Collaborationists no longer appeared as the natural leaders of the Afrikaner people. National sentiment crystallised round the heroes who had fought to the bitter end. From that day to this the leading Boer generals and statesmen and their sons have dominated South African politics. If they had all been of the same political persuasion, historians might have spoken of a Family Compact. As they ultimately moved into opposing camps, their old comradeship in arms may have been the cement that has held the country together through all its feuds.

By the peace terms, the burghers in arms surrendered and accepted King Edward as their lawful sovereign. The British government gave £3,000,000 to repair farm damage and restore the people to their land, and, in addition, loans free of interest for two years. The colonial rebels were not given any guarantee by the treaty. The south-eastern part of the Transvaal—the former New Republic—had already been annexed to

Natal before the peace. The new colonies were promised representative government in due course, and there was to be no enfranchisement of Natives before that stage was reached.

Two months before the peace, Rhodes had died in his cottage at Muizenberg. He was a chastened man; and since even Jameson came to be forgiven by many Afrikaner leaders, Rhodes if he had lived might have made greater contributions to the common good than he ever did before 1896. But the weak heart which led to his premature death (he was in his forty-ninth year) was a double misfortune. It gave him a sense of urgency—"so little done, so much to do"—and tempted him to short-cut the paths of history. The publication of his will made known the great benefaction with which his name will ever be associated, the scholarships to bring to Oxford young men from all over the English-speaking world.

The war was over when Kruger followed Rhodes to the grave. Having bequeathed a political testament to his people, he died in Switzerland, "far from the land to which he had devoted his life". His burial with great ceremony in Pretoria coincided with the political revival of the Afrikaners.

The five years that followed the peace were the period of "Reconstruction". The term reminds us once again of the American Civil War, but in leniency to the conquered the comparison is very much in favour of the British reconstruction of South Africa. In America twelve years elapsed before the last of the Southerners were free to govern themselves, and by then the rights of the Negro were enshrined in the federal constitution. In South Africa the period was five years, and political rights were not given to Natives. Had they been given, the Boers could not have risen with new political strength from the grave of the republics; and Milner thought this concession in the treaty the greatest mistake of his life. But he had not acted merely out of tenderness for the feelings of his defeated enemies. On this question there was no difference between Boer and Uitlander. Milner was not a Lincoln, and the British South Africans were not New Englanders.

The burghers returning from the field, and their wives from the concentration camps, to their ruined homesteads were in no mood to praise the administrative efficiency of the new

government. Yet Milner, who had been tactless as a diplomatist and one-sided as a politician, carried out the administrative task of reconstruction with great credit. Agriculture had to be revived during two seasons of drought; the railways repaired and used for civil purposes when they were strained by the loads of troops and homecoming internees and prisoners of war; a brand new administrative organisation created; and the mines brought back into operation. All this was done. The money granted in accordance with the peace terms, and more besides, was quickly distributed. The plan to flood the new colonies with British immigrants failed, though a few hundred were placed on the land; the genius of South African history worked steadily against the growth of a rural British population.

Milner wanted immigrants, anglicisation and prosperity before the time should come for parliaments and elected majorities. The only force that could bring these things quickly was gold. The derelict mines had to be got to work as rapidly as possible. But the large Native labour force on which they depended had melted away. The wages offered at first were even lower than before the war, and other means of livelihood had in the meantime become available to the African. It was impossible to recruit the required number of miners by traditional means.

Two alternatives suggested themselves. One was white labour, which one mine manager thought he had proved to be practicable. This manager, F. H. P. Creswell, was destined to play a political rôle in which his white labour idea was dominant. But other mining authorities disagreed. As for bringing poor immigrants from Europe, it was thought very bad policy to have Europeans alongside Natives, doing the same work, and for wages "little if any higher".

There remained the proposal to introduce Chinese coolies. If this immigration were to follow the plan of the importation of Indians to Natal, South Africa would have a new racial problem on her hands to complicate the already over-complicated situation. On this point there was general agreement. But the plan was to import the coolies for a limited time and a special purpose, to prevent them from entering any other occupation but the unskilled mining work for which they were

intended, and to guarantee their repatriation to China when the work was done. This was just traditional "Native policy" in an extreme form. The labourers were to be brought from further afield than the Transkei or Mozambique, but like Africans they were to serve the white man's purposes without being allowed to become a part of his society.

The opposition to the scheme—in South Africa—arose from doubts whether the repatriation would in fact be achieved. The advocacy of the scheme, not only by the mining magnates, is explained by the urgent necessity to develop the gold industry as a basis for general economic recovery and expansion.

The Chinese began to arrive in 1904, and gold mining did rapidly develop. But the political effects were at least as great as the economic. The Liberal party in Britain took up the cry of "Chinese slavery" as an electioneering weapon, and largely because of it achieved the landslide electoral victory of 1906. While the British Liberals complained that the coolies were shut up in compounds like slaves, the Transvaal people protested that they were not fenced in at all, but wandered about the Rand to commit crimes. The new British government took steps to release them from their slavery, but the coolies regarded repatriation as the rude awakening from their most cherished dream—to remain in South Africa. By 1910 the last of the Chinese had departed.

The Liberal victory in England had a momentous effect on South Africa. After the war the Boer leaders had, apart from the visit of a few deputations to Europe, lived in retirement, attending to their farms and the practice of the law. They refused to sit on the nominated legislative councils of the new colonies. They protested at some of Milner's financial arrangements, and still more at the anglicising policy of the new education departments, which allotted too little time to the Dutch language in the schools. But it was the Chinese question that gave the final stimulus to political action.

Under the leadership of Botha, the Transvaal Boers formed a party called *Het Volk*, The People. Its principal demand was responsible government, from which all other blessings would flow. A minority of the Transvaal British, who supported this demand, organised a Responsible Government party, which was



later called Nationalist and finally absorbed by Het Volk. The British who inherited the Uitlander-Milner tradition became the Progressive Party. This bore the same name as the pro-British party organised in the Cape Colony after the Jameson Raid. In the Orange River Colony Hertzog and De Wet were the chief organisers of the Orangia-Unie, analogous to Het Volk.

The British elements in all the colonies but Natal now faced strong Afrikaner parties (everywhere supported by small British minorities) which had good prospects of success at the polls. In the Cape the Progressives were in a better position than before the war, because the rebels had been disfranchised for five years. An attempt had been made to suspend the constitution of the colony, to give further security to the British during the reconstruction period; but the opposition of other parts of the Empire, as well as of the parliamentary feelings of Chamberlain himself, frustrated it. In 1904 elections were held, and a narrow Progressive majority brought Jameson, of unhappy memory, into power.

His allies in the new colonies were uneasy. The Conservatives in Britain planned a representative system, without a responsible executive, for those territories. But the Liberals would go further. They had opposed Chamberlain, Milner and all their works for ten years. Now Smuts, the Boer General, came to London to ask for responsible government. Campbell-Bannerman, the Prime Minister, was convinced. Smuts put in writing what he and Botha had resolved when peace was signed: "Let it be clearly understood once and for all that the Boers and their leaders do not wish to raise the question of the annexation of the new Colonies or the British flag. They accept accomplished facts." On this basis Campbell-Bannerman resolved to trust the Boers. He carried his cabinet with him at a meeting in which at least one member was moved to tears. Full responsible government was given to the Transvaal and, shortly after, to the Orange River Colony.

To Botha and Smuts the undertaking about the annexation and the British flag became a debt of honour. They regarded, as many others have done, the concession to the so recently defeated republics as the noblest act in British history. It wiped out the past, the "century of wrong". But in the Orange River

Colony a different view prevailed. Hertzog regarded the grant of responsible government as merely the fulfilment of one of the terms of the peace treaty; others of its terms, as for instance the status of the Dutch language, he (wrongly) thought Britain had shamefully failed to honour. He had put his name to no document accepting the annexations as irrevocable; he had only signed the peace treaty, which Smuts had not done. These differences of opinion were destined in time to rise to the surface of politics.

In 1907 elections were held in the new self-governing colonies. Het Volk and its British allies won a large majority in the Transvaal, while in the neighbouring state the Orania-Unie made very nearly a clean sweep of the constituencies. Botha became Premier of the Transvaal, with Smuts as his principal lieutenant; Fischer Premier of the Orange River Colony with Hertzog as second in command. The Boers had lost the war but won the peace.

## CHAPTER IX

### NATIONALISM

THE emotional forces that were to move the various peoples of South Africa after 1907 had already become clearly apparent by then.

The Afrikaner people, formed in the eighteenth century, was a self-conscious nationality by the twentieth. This consummation was long in coming. Though Afrikaners were conscious of their differences from other people since the time of W. A. van der Stel, their feeling could not for many generations be called a national one. Even the republics formed after the Great Trek lacked this sentiment. The Free State had many English-speaking citizens, and many colonial Afrikaners, to whom state boundaries meant little. President Boshof came to Bloemfontein from Natal, and after his term of office returned to Natal, to his British allegiance and a political rôle in that colony. Brand came from the Cape, and while President accepted a British knighthood. The English language was generally spoken in Bloemfontein, even by many people of Dutch descent. Free State farmers owned other farms in the Cape or Natal, and British colonists had farms in the Free State.

This easy intercourse with the British was less noticeable in the Transvaal, but that country was for many years so deeply divided by faction that it lacked even the elements of a national consciousness. In the Cape Colony the anglicising process went on through the nineteenth century. School and Kerk were filled with Scotsmen. Dutch Reformed services were often conducted in English. Portraits and effigies of Queen Victoria were venerated even in farmhouses where English was not understood. The Cape Afrikaners were led and represented by the partly anglicised squirearchy and townsmen of the Boland, between whom and the pastoralists of the interior there was a gulf dating back for generations. These leaders in Church and State deplored the Great Trek and all its consequences.

The diverse elements were moved towards a common sentiment and national unity by British policy. The annexation of Basutoland and Griqualand West started the process. The feeling that the Free State had been wronged made Afrikaners everywhere aware that the Free Staters were their own people. In the Cape Colony this feeling merged with another, that the Afrikaners there were subjects of a régime not their own. English being the official language, people who could not speak it fluently were excluded from public life. Few Afrikaners sat in the Cape Parliament or held positions in the civil service. To the simple Boer of the *platteland* the whole apparatus of State appeared as an alien institution imposed on him from without. But it must not be forgotten that his ancestors had felt much the same about the East India Company.

The Dutchman was almost as much a foreigner as the Englishman. When the Afrikaner put pen to paper he struggled to express himself in a language which he encountered chiefly in his ponderous *Statenbijbel*, but which as a spoken language was quite foreign to him. If the use of the Dutch language was required, most Afrikaners felt as uneasy and inferior as if they had to use English. Many used English more naturally than Dutch, and preferred it even for their love-letters. But the feelings of their souls could be properly uttered only in the despised *patois* which did not yet rank among the languages of the world.

After the middle of the century this difficulty gave rise to a movement in favour of Afrikaans as a written language. Homely poems were published. In 1875 the launching of the "Society of True Afrikaners" at Paarl brought this "first language movement" into the limelight. Rules of spelling and grammar were laid down and a newspaper founded. The protagonists of Afrikaans had a long row to hoe. Most of their educated countrymen clung to the language of Holland. But a new literary life was given to the popular tongue after the Anglo-Boer War, when the "second language movement" produced poetry and other writing of a higher order, and the *taal* began to show signs of approaching maturity.

In the meantime national sentiment developed independently of the language movement. The British annexation

of the Transvaal did much to foster it, but the War of Independence and the victory of Majuba still more, starting a thrill of pride and a blood-is-thicker-than-water feeling all over the Afrikaans-speaking world. In the Cape two organisations came to life during the British occupation of the Transvaal. One, the Afrikaner Bond, was begotten by the same parents as the language movement. Its object was to cultivate national sentiment among the Afrikaners, and its tone was republican and anti-British. The other, the Farmers Protection Union, was a response to an excise duty which was greatly resented by the wine farmers. But J. H. Hofmeyr—affectionately known as Onze Jan, Our John—had much wider objects in view for this body. It was to be a means of stimulating the political consciousness and activity of the Cape Afrikaners. When the two organisations merged under the name of the Afrikaner Bond and the leadership of Hofmeyr, the latter weaned the movement from its republican tendency and inculcated loyalty to the Crown. The fostering of national self-respect among Afrikaners and of a South African nationality embracing people of all races whose primary allegiance was to South Africa remained its principal objects.

The Bond was as highly organised as an army; it was not only for many years the only political party in the Cape, but the lineal ancestor of more than one party existing at the present day. It procured the election of Afrikaners to Parliament; got the Dutch language recognised, first in parliamentary debate, then to an ever increasing degree in education, the civil service and for other official purposes.

Though functioning as a political party and represented by a solid phalanx in Parliament, the Bond as such never formed a government. Hofmeyr felt that a Bond government would provoke the British colonists to counter-organisation and so produce political division on racial lines. His policy was therefore to support an English-speaking Premier on his own terms, and to withdraw that support when it was no longer deserved. During the 'eighties and early 'nineties there developed, therefore, a rough and unstable division of the English-speaking politicians into a pro-Bond and an anti-Bond group. The former justified its position to its own people by claiming that

the Bond was loyal to the Crown and the British connection, while the latter gained strength whenever that loyalty appeared to be doubtful. Rhodes, who became an intimate friend of Hofmeyr, was pro-Bond, and was kept in office by Bond votes.

Had Cape politics not been affected by events outside the colony, the Bond and its allies might have become and remained an ordinary political party. But the focus of all South African politics was situated in the Transvaal, and the reaction to the British annexation there determined the political feelings of Afrikaners everywhere. In the course of 1879 a series of mass meetings was held in the annexed republic, bringing together the great bulk of the burghers of the whole country. For the first time these farmers, who lived in isolation, realised that they had a common cause and became aware of a national sentiment. Out of that awareness sprang the War of Independence. When it ended in victory at Majuba a passionate excitement and rejoicing stirred both the republicans and the colonial Afrikaners, and from that time a feeling of identity united them all.

In the following years the friction between Britain and the Transvaal—the Free State—kept the South African Republic in the foreground of the Cape Afrikaner's vision. His heart beat in sympathy with the Transvaal over Bechuanaland, Swaziland, the outlet to the sea, and other controversies. Yet his feelings were mixed, for loyalty to the Queen and attachment to his own economic interests often prompted him to oppose Kruger's policy. His feet were set on the road to complete identity with the republican Transvaler, but further shocks would be needed to impel him forward on that way.

In the republics themselves nationalism was fostered by an outside influence. The burghers of those countries being farmers, and the population of the small towns largely English, the republican governments looked to Holland for the trained officials needed to run the machinery of State. This was done to a very slight extent in the Free State, but in a big way in the Transvaal. The Hollanders came from the nation-conscious Europe of the nineteenth century, and were shocked by the easy-going indifference to state boundaries which they found in South Africa. They used their influence to inculcate national

feeling, which as they saw it should be not very different from Dutch national feeling. Even in the early days of the Trek emissaries from Holland had brought such notions to the laagers of Natal and the interior, where there was much hoisting of Dutch flags and emphasis on the common Netherlandish traditions.

This was the background of Afrikanerdom when it heard the news of the Jameson Raid. Everywhere people who had come under English influence and were forgetting that blood is thicker than water received what was described as an electric shock. A wave of national feeling swept over the people, a more powerful wave even than in 1881.

During all these years, the sentiment of nationality was giving rise to concepts in the sphere of practical politics. Such slogans as "a united South Africa under its own flag" and "Africa for the Afrikaners" showed the aspirations which national feeling had provoked. The flag envisaged was the Transvaal Vierkleur, the Union an enlarged South African Republic. Kruger became the hero of many a colonial Afrikaner.

It was natural therefore that such a man, British subject as he was, should regard the Anglo-Boer War as an attack by Britain on his "own people". The influence of Hofmeyr kept the Bond, as such, formally loyal and practically neutral. But numbers of Bondsmen felt it their duty to take up arms for the republics, and many more used political means to hamper the British effort or mitigate the consequences of the republican defeat. Colonial Afrikaners felt this defeat as if it had been inflicted on themselves, and those who had not fought actively on the Boer side were none the less bitter for that.

In the aftermath of the war Afrikaner sentiment was embodied in three separate but now parallel and sympathetic organisations: the Bond in the Cape, Het Volk in the Transvaal and the Orangia-Unie in the Orange River Colony. But in each of these there was a division of feeling and opinion. While all had the same sentiment of nationality, they did not agree on their attitudes to the British flag and allegiance and the British population in their midst. Hofmeyr and a section of the Bond persisted in their aim of uniting the two white nationalities, and accepted the British flag at least for the time being. Botha,

Smuts and their followers in Het Volk felt that the grant of self-government to the Transvaal imposed the same opinion on them as a matter of honour. But other members of Het Volk and the Bond and a larger proportion of the Orangia-Unie clung to the hope of a republican restoration and maintained the attitude that had been general before 1899. For the time being the two opinions continued side by side without splitting the party organisations.

It was inevitable that the growth of Afrikaner nationalism should stimulate British sentiment on the other side. The rise of the Afrikaner Bond, the recognition of Dutch as an official language, the defeat at Majuba and the retrocession of the Transvaal all led to protest and indignation on the British side in the Cape Colony. Then as always the British attitude was conditioned by the fact that the Afrikaners were a majority of the white population. The colony had become accustomed to an English-speaking Parliament and the British section had regarded the gradual anglicisation of the Afrikaners as pointing to the future unity of the colony on an Anglo-Saxon basis. While these conditions remained the British section could fight for responsible government, condemn the interference of the "imperial factor" and even, at times, apply the name "Afrikaner" to itself. But the rise of the new nationalism—"a new force that affects the imagination like a nightmare with silent horrible pressure"—led to a change of heart. The imperial factor came to be thought of as a bulwark against the dangers of "Africa for the Afrikaners" and their "own flag". Thus the sentiment which was in essence a British nationalism acquired the name of imperialism and often led to exaggerated emphasis on Empire and British Supremacy. After Majuba, and during the struggle for the possession of Bechuanaland, British colonists formed the Empire League for the defence of the imperial connection. But this passed away with the crisis which had given it birth. The need for such a league was not widely felt, since every Cape government had English-speaking leaders and the Bond always remained in the background. Attempts to extend the Bond to the republics failed there for the same reason: the Afrikaners were in power and saw no need for a Bond.



The crisis of the Jameson Raid, which sent an "electric shock" through the Afrikaners, did much the same for the British. The group of anti-Bond members of Parliament, who had come to be called Progressives, now formed a well-organised party under that name. Behind it in the constituencies stood the South African League, successor to the Empire League and a counterpart of the Bond. The Progressives lost the bitterly fought election of 1898 by the narrowest of margins; won that of 1904 equally narrowly when the rebels were disfranchised; and lost in 1908 when the rebels voted again. In the meantime, in 1903, the Bondsmen in Parliament and their English-speaking allies had adopted the name of the South African Party.

The British were quicker to organise in the Transvaal, where they were Uitlanders, than in the Cape Colony. But the Transvaal National Union could play no part in legitimate politics. After the war that body was succeeded by a Progressive Party in which the personnel of the National Union played a leading part.

Everywhere but in Natal the organised forces of British nationalism confronted the still stronger forces of Afrikaner nationalism. That a British minority supported the latter side was due to several factors. Such support was given always on the understanding that the Bond or Het Volk accepted the British flag and allegiance, and this understanding was always honoured by a part, though not the whole, of those bodies. This obstacle removed, the pro-Bond British took their stand on the principle that the two white nationalities must be drawn together, and that the Progressive Parties with their frankly anti-Afrikaner attitude could not do this. Rhodes, except for a brief moment before the war when he "came out strongly as a Progressive", consistently supported the view that co-operation between the white sections was a necessary basis of politics. He expressed this opinion even to a very Jingo audience in the midst of the war. Lastly, this British section was antagonised by the flamboyant chauvinism of the Progressives, and by what they thought the shameful acts, culminating in the Raid, done in the British name. But they were no less insistent than their opponents on the maintenance of the

British connection; a fact to be remembered if later political developments are to be understood.

A nation is held together by a common historical tradition. By the first decade of the twentieth century the Afrikaners had developed such a tradition and embodied it in historical literature. The machinations of the early missionaries, the Black Circuit, Slagter's Nek, the great romance of the Trek, the embattled laagers standing against Zulus and Matabele, England's pursuit of the Trekkers and her unjust appropriation of Natal, Basutoland, Griqualand West, the Transvaal itself, Zululand, Rhodesia; the Uitlanders undermining the South African Republic from within, then the Jameson Raid, the Boer War, the farm-burning and the concentration camps, the anglicising policy in the Cape and later in the 'annexed republics'--all this formed the single track of history that gave Afrikaners a sense of common sufferings and a common destiny.

But in the year 1907 such history was not taught in schools. There the emphasis was still on the greatness of the Empire and the glory of its conquests. The Afrikaner schoolboy, reading *ad nauseam* of "1066 and all that", Wolfe and Clive, turned in repulsion to what he thought was his own tradition. Descendants of Western Province landlords and Scottish predikants who had revered Queen Victoria and condemned the Trek came to feel as if their own ancestors had been murdered by Dingaan or beaten him at Blood River.

When the Afrikaner version at last penetrated the school-books and was patronised by education departments, it would be the turn of the British child to be repelled and to cast about for a tradition that he could feel to be his own. But in 1907 that day was still far off.

## CHAPTER X

### UNION AND DISUNITY

THAT the two old British colonies and the two former republics of South Africa should have merged in a close legislative union on the eighth anniversary of the treaty of Vereeniging is often regarded as one of the miracles of political history. In fact it is not more remarkable than that the union, so quickly achieved in outward form, has not been realised in the hearts of men to the present day.

The causes of the unification were both sentimental and practical. The Afrikaner people were, after 1902, acutely aware of their common national identity. Before the war there had been clumsy attempts to federate South Africa, but Grey and Carnarvon had failed. Rhodes faced the apparently insuperable obstacle of the independence of the republics on the one hand and the British allegiance of the colonies on the other. How could both be preserved in a single union? The war removed this obstacle. All South Africa now owed allegiance to the same crown and flew the same flag. In the bitterness of defeat many far-seeing Afrikaners thought that a new ideal ought now to be substituted for the old. Republican independence was lost, but a union of all Afrikaners—together with the British—in one state had now become technically possible, and might lead to greater things than the republics had ever had in their grasp.

Among the British federation was an old political tradition, now sanctified by the memory of Rhodes. He had bequeathed his home, Groote Schuur, to the government of a united South Africa as the official residence of its Prime Minister. Union under the British flag had been the main object of his life's work. The examples of Canada and, more recently, Australia were a challenge to British colonists in Africa.

Had the problem been one of uniting purely British and purely Afrikaner states it is safe to say that it would not have

been solved in 1910. But the populations were mixed; the Afrikaners were in great strength everywhere outside Natal, and British everywhere outside the Orange River Colony. A union of states might therefore come with a great flourish of trumpets and mutual felicitations, yet leave the fusion of the two white nationalities as far off as ever.

As this was well understood by many men, some approached the question with ulterior aims in view. Could the union be so contrived as to give predominance to British, or to Afrikaner, ideals and power? In 1906 the Progressives governed the Cape, Natal of course was British, and the other two were crown colonies. A union under Progressive auspices might be made. But the Liberals had just come into office in Britain, self-government was to be given to the ex-republics, and neither the Bond nor Het Volk would support a move while crown colony administration remained. By the end of 1907 the picture had changed. There was responsible government everywhere, the Dutch governed the Transvaal and Orange River Colony, and though Jameson was still in power in the Cape he was willing to work with Botha and Fischer. F. S. Malan, a former Bond extremist who had been led to the ideal of conciliation by his deep religious convictions, made the first move, supported by Jameson, in the Cape Parliament. Lord Selborne, High Commissioner and Governor of the inland colonies, gave the weight of his name to a memorandum drafted by Lionel Curtis, one of Milner's young Oxford men in the Transvaal administration. The High Commissioner was determined to avoid Carnarvon's mistake of thrusting an ideal upon unwilling South Africans, and did not publish the memorandum till invited by the Cape government to do so. Thus the question of unification was brought before the public. By 1908, when the National Convention met in Durban to draw up a scheme, Merriman and the South African Party were in office in Cape Town; the Union would be under Afrikaner auspices after all.

The Selborne memorandum had said little about the sentimental aspect. Without that, there were enough practical reasons to make union an urgent necessity. In 1903 all British South Africa had at last been united in a customs union; but

the competition between Natal and the Cape for the Transvaal trade, the preference of the Transvaal for the Delagoa Bay route and its ability, because of its wealth, to dictate terms to everybody threatened to break the union. The question was one of railways even more than customs tariffs. Although the railways of the two former republics were now run by a common administration, which therefore profited by all traffic north of the Orange instead of only north of the Vaal, the Lourenço Marques route was still more profitable to it than the others. It was an advantage also to the Portuguese, and they made the adequate use of that line a condition for the recruitment of Native labour in Mozambique for the Rand mines. With the departure of the Chinese the mines were dependent on Mozambique labour. Without a political union, and particularly a union of the railways, the customs union might break up and the paths of the four colonies diverge.

A Native rebellion in Natal in 1906 revived memories of Langalibalele, of Shepstone and the Zulu War, and pointed the need for uniformity of Native policy. Still more serious was the position in Europe. Ex-President Steyn insisted that South Africa must be united before a great war in Europe came to divide the country more profoundly than ever. What kind of unity he had in mind was obscure at the time but became clearer in the sequel.

These and all the other advantages of unity, such as drove the Americans, Canadians, Germans and Australians into federation, were in the minds of the constitution-makers who assembled in Durban in the insufferable heat of October, 1908. Further meetings in Cape Town and Bloemfontein rounded off the work in 1909. The lead was taken by the Transvalers. Smuts drew up a draft as a basis for discussion, and had the advantage that his party and its Progressive opponents had reached agreement before they went to Durban. The Transvaal had the further advantage of being the rich relation. The other colonies would gain financially by union, and the financial sacrifice of the Transvalers entitled them to a respectful hearing. But Botha, Smuts and their party did not represent the "moneyed interest" of their colony. The Progressives were the party of the mining magnates. It is conceivable that if

they had been in power they would have driven a harder bargain.

It was perhaps the dominant position of the Transvaal, and the dominance of Het Volk in that colony, that decided the Convention in favour of the close union that was adopted. Natal was strongly federalist, and in the Cape Colony the principle of federation was supported by Hofmeyr and Schreiner. Their chief motive was to safeguard the liberal Native policy of the Colony. But neither Hofmeyr nor Schreiner was in the Convention, and other leaders took a different view. In the end the Union constitution was ratified by three Parliaments and by a referendum in Natal.

In some ways the agreements in the Convention were due to misunderstandings. Different men expected different results from the same arrangements. Hertzog and his political friends would not have accepted these arrangements if they had known that five years hence the Union would fight at Britain's side in a European war. The British generally would not have accepted them if they had known that, in fifteen years, Hertzog and his Nationalists would be in power. De Villiers, Merriman and more certainly Sauer would have made very different arrangements if they had foreseen that, in twenty-seven years, the Cape Native franchise would be abolished.

But hope is greater than fear. When the South Africa Act was passed by the British Parliament in 1909 everyone saw in it such possibilities as he wanted to see. Many of its provisions were similar to those which other Dominions had adopted from the British constitution: a Governor-General, Senate and House of Assembly; a Cabinet of ministers responsible to Parliament; a single supreme court with provincial and local divisions and an appellate division (here South Africa differed from the federal countries); a permanent civil service. The Senate (here was a trace of federalism) represented the equality of the provinces, the eight Senators from each province being elected by the provincial councillors and the province's members of the House of Assembly. There were in addition eight nominated Senators, four of whom were to be acquainted with the wishes of the Natives. As Senators held their seats for ten years, their house might come to be of a different complexion from "another

place", whose life span was five years. Hertzog later obtained power for a government to dissolve the Senate after a general election for the lower house.

The composition of the House of Assembly was a controversial matter. The franchise laws of the colonies differed, and none would give way to the others on this point. They therefore agreed to differ. The Cape kept its property and literacy tests and no colour bar; the colour bar in the other colonies, frank in the ex-republics and decently clothed in Natal, remained. But Non-Europeans, who remained eligible for the Cape Provincial Council, could not sit in the Union Parliament. As a concession to the Cape the non-European vote there could not be abolished without a two-thirds majority of both houses sitting together. Since the extension of that system to the north required no special procedure, it seemed obvious to the Cape liberals that their ideas were destined to spread.

How were seats to be apportioned among the provinces? The north would not allow the coloured voters of the Cape to be taken into account. But if only white voters were counted, the Cape would suffer through having many Europeans who did not qualify for the franchise. Hence the next compromise: seats apportioned among the provinces in proportion to the adult white male population, but apportioned within each province according to the number of registered voters.

It was an Afrikaner tradition, realised both in the republics and the Cape Colony, that the rural areas should be more strongly represented than the towns. The urban British countered this, which they thought a racial stigma upon themselves, with "one vote one value". As a compromise the commission of judges, which was to delimit the constituencies every five years, was empowered to depart 15 per cent either way from the provincial quota, so that a "sparsely inhabited", i.e. rural, constituency might have a smaller electorate and an urban one a greater.

The provinces were completely subordinated to the Union Parliament, the ordinances of the provincial councils being valid only if not in conflict with a Union statute. These councils were given control of education "other than higher", of hospitals, municipal institutions and a few other matters, their

taxing powers were limited and their executive committees were subordinated to Administrators appointed by the central government.

The equality of the Dutch and English languages for all official purposes was guaranteed, and like the Cape franchise could be altered only by a two-thirds majority of both houses sitting together. As a happy concession to old feelings, the name of the Orange Free State was restored, and "House of Assembly" was rendered into Dutch as *Volksraad*.

All these hurdles surmounted, the Convention was nearly disrupted by the question of the capital. The solution represented by Washington, Ottawa and Canberra was entertained but rejected in favour of a judgment of Solomon: Pretoria to be the executive capital, Cape Town the legislative, and Bloemfontein the judicial; Maritzburg to have monetary compensation. Thus Ministers and a host of civil servants would have to migrate, like storks or swallows, with the parliamentary seasons.

A democratic constitution is like a machine which requires a force—steam, oil, electricity—to work it. Public opinion expressed through a party system is that force. The makers of a constitution seldom trouble themselves about this noisy but indispensable adjunct to their machine.

Could the statesmen of 1909 have devised a party system suited to the working of the constitution? Could they have grouped themselves into two parties differing on questions of tariff, railway rating policy, provincial powers and the like, while agreeing on the essential constitutional questions? It is very unlikely. In the Afrikaner tradition the ideal party, to which the development of any party must tend, was an organisation embracing the whole Afrikaner nation and expressing its national sentiments: thus the Bond, Het Volk, the Orangia-Unie. The opponents of these had formed analogous parties with the slogan "Vote British". The British who rejected this sentiment worked with the Afrikaner parties. That was the tradition of the country. It did not extend to Natal, where there was no developed party system but a rough division between the trading and sugar planting interests of the coast and the farming interest of the interior, Durban against Maritzburg.



When Botha was called upon to form the first Union ministry, he put it together out of the existing ministries, which were all of the same complexion except in Natal. The members elected in that province were mostly non-party independents. Botha's followers then came together to merge their parties into one. The South African Party and its Afrikaner Bond, Het Volk and the Orangia-Unie flowed together into one South African National Party, from whose name the "national" was shortly dropped.

The principal opposition came from the "Vote British" Unionist Party, the successor of the Progressives. At this stage, two years after Union, the party division was substantially what it had been in the Transvaal since the war and in the Cape for a generation. But the divisions within the South African Party were about to become more significant. A split was brought about by General Hertzog, Botha's Minister of Justice.

Hertzog had, before 1910, been Minister of Education in the Orange River Colony. There he had introduced into the schools a system of compulsory bilingualism and of instruction through both media for the same pupils in different subjects. This measure produced a violent reaction among the British throughout South Africa. Apart from the educational issue involved, it was fashionable for the British to despise everything "Dutch", to regard the learning of that language as a waste of time, and to assume that English, even in the Orange River Colony, must become increasingly dominant. This attitude was the chief cause of the great emphasis on language rights by the other side. But "Hertzogism" became such a bogey to the British that Botha was nervous of including Hertzog in his cabinet.

The Union Parliament being supreme and unhampered by federal restrictions, the school question was raised in it almost from the beginning, even though schools were a provincial matter. The tact of Botha, Malan and others procured a report which condemned the purely English-medium system of the other provinces as well as the element of compulsion in the Free State, but Hertzog felt aggrieved. Tension increased till in 1912 he made a series of speeches announcing the principles of "South Africa first", Empire second, and the "two

streams" in which the two nationalities should flow separately for a time. In the distant future the two streams might flow together, but then the stream which had its origin in the soil, history and traditions of South Africa would be dominant and would absorb the other. "The Afrikaner must be the master in South Africa." In the term "Afrikaner" he would include English-speaking people, but only those whose national sentiments were the same as his.

- This was "Hertzogism" with a vengeance, and the British section reacted sharply to it. A Minister from Natal resigned from the cabinet. As Hertzog refused to do likewise, Botha himself resigned and reformed the cabinet without Hertzog. Within a year the latter and his followers had set up the National Party, based on the principles Hertzog had announced. It was not formally a republican or secessionist party, but Afrikaner national aspirations were its driving force. Its strength lay mainly in the Free State, where it soon became dominant. The memory of 1902, of the Free Staters' resentment against Botha and his Transvalers, was not dead.

The new party was hardly, as its members would say, "dry behind the ears", when the expected crisis broke upon Europe. Against such a possibility the Union had just established its Defence Force, of which Beyers, Boer War veteran, was Commandant-General. Botha informed the British government that the Union could take over its own defences, setting free the imperial forces for service elsewhere. Britain, while gratefully accepting this offer, asked the Union to invade German South-West Africa and capture the wireless stations. Botha would do it. But knowing his countrymen he called a meeting of the rural commandants to test their feeling. Personal loyalty to Botha proved to be their predominant feeling.

With equal caution and tact the Prime Minister resolved to use only volunteers for the expedition. But rumours to the contrary had already spread. War for England against Germany was more than many "bitter-enders" could stomach. Some thought, like the Irish, that England's difficulty was the Boers' opportunity. Now was the chance to "throw off the yoke" and restore the republics. A well-known "prophet" in the Western

Transvaal had encouraging visions. In that area and in the Free State an ill-co-ordinated rebellion broke out. Famous Boer veterans supported it. Steyn refused to use his influence against it. Hertzog did so, but cautiously, afraid of losing his influence altogether. Beyers resigned his command, rebelled, and was drowned while crossing the swollen Vaal River. De la Rey was accidentally shot before the fighting started. De Wet was captured. One commander went over to the Germans with most of his men, and was followed by escaping rebels. But Botha, using almost exclusively Afrikaner troops, put down the rebellion, and meted out very mild punishment. Only one rebel, who had been on active service at the front when he went over to the revolt, was shot.

The Union could then play its part in the war. Botha rapidly conquered German South-West. South African troops then went to Europe and to German East Africa, where General Smuts took command of the whole imperial force and soon ousted the Germans from their main positions. Smuts then went to England, to the Imperial War Cabinet, to the British War Cabinet itself; was offered and refused the Palestine command; played a prominent part in negotiations on the continent, in Ireland, and with Welsh strikers, and in founding the League of Nations. Botha and Smuts went to the Peace Conference, but memories of Vereeniging taught them that the vindictive peace was a disaster. Only with great difficulty could Botha persuade Smuts to sign it.

That Smuts should have played so great a part on the world stage, that South Africa with the other Dominions should have been a signatory of the peace treaty and a member of the League of Nations, and been entrusted by the League with the government of South-West Africa under mandate, all meant a new and honourable status for the Union. But it was not good enough for the Nationalists. Their party had been given a great fillip by the 1914 rebellion. At the election of the following year it made a considerable show, though its main strength was still confined to the Free State and the south-western Transvaal.

While Botha and Smuts went to Paris to make peace, Hertzog with a Nationalist delegation went unofficially to take advantage of the new principle of the rights of small nations.

They wanted republican independence for South Africa; failing that, the restoration of the former republics, or of the Free State at least. Lloyd George told them, in effect, that South Africans were masters of their own house, in which neither he nor anyone else could interfere. His attitude was apt, and constitutionally correct, but glossed over the fact that South Africa was not yet one house, and that there were still "no South Africans".

• Worn out by war and peace-making, Botha died soon after his return from Versailles, and was succeeded by Smuts. In 1920 Smuts faced the third general election, and with unhappy results. As against 41 S.A.P. seats, plus 3 pro-government independents, the Nationalists won 44, the Unionists 25 and Labour 21. The Unionists had supported the government on the war issue, and would do so now against the Nationalists; but if Labour supported the Opposition the government's majority would be negligible. The S.A.P. obviously needed a closer rapprochement with some other party. It approached Hertzog first, but these negotiations broke down on the question of republicanism, on which the Nationalists were now insistent. Smuts then turned to the Unionists, who accepted his terms and merged with the South African Party. This produced results at a new election in 1921: S.A.P., 79; Nationalists, 45; Labour, 9; and 1 independent.

Here was a change in the party system. Whereas a purely British party had up to 1915 provided the main opposition to an Afrikaner party with some British support, now all the British outside the Labour movement had merged with the moderate Afrikaners, and were opposed by a militant, republican and rising Afrikaner Nationalism. It was almost as if Rhodes and Kruger were facing each other again, and across the floor of a common chamber. The natural swing of the pendulum against the government would lead Afrikaner "Saps", but not British, to go over to the opposition. The South African Party would become increasingly British, and the dividing line between parties would come near to coinciding with the division of race and nationality. The other obvious prospect was that, when the Nationalists had increased a little more, Labour would hold the balance of power. Against this background the

sudden growth of the Labour movement in 1922 can be seen in its significant proportions.

Trade unions, socialism and "Labour members" had burst upon South Africa after the Boer War. The white miners on the Rand were mostly Englishmen, largely Cornishmen. Their background was the long struggle of British trade unionism, culminating in the recent setback of the Taff Vale decision. But in the Transvaal their movement acquired a new feature. They fought not only against capitalists, but against the encroachment of cheap Native labour on their own profitable preserves. Their leader in the Transvaal Parliament was F. H. P. Creswell, the mine manager who had preferred white to black or yellow labour. In 1922 Creswell was still their leader, now in the Union Parliament. As the Nationalists were at first confined to the Free State and Western Transvaal, so Labour drew almost all its support from the Rand, with a much smaller following in Durban and Cape Town.

The industrial atmosphere of the Rand, like the physical atmosphere, was highly charged with electricity. Before 1914 Johannesburg householders grew accustomed to keeping stocks of candles, and baths full of water, against the chance of strikes. The miners had a way of bringing other workers out in sympathy with them. But though one writer describes this period under the heading "Karl Marx Comes to Town", the strikes on the mines were inspired by something far removed from Marxism. As the old frontiersmen of Graaff-Reinet in 1795 had spoken the language of the French Revolution when they rebelled against Equality and Fraternity, the Rand miners used Marxist jargon and unfurled the socialist banner when they fought for white privilege against black encroachment. They took their stand on certain ratios between white and black workers, and on the exclusion of the black from skilled work. To the mine-owners an increase in the proportion of Natives meant lower working costs—wages being about half their total expenditure. To humanitarians, the exclusion of Natives from skilled work was oppression. If the struggle was between Capital and Labour, it was Capital and Labour Through the Looking-Glass.

Both sides were highly organised. The Trade Unions were

federated, and the Transvaal Chamber of Mines was dominated by the handful of great holding companies which controlled the individual mines. Any local clash was liable to involve these two concentrations of power. In July, 1913, a strike on the East Rand led to rioting in Johannesburg. There was shooting in the streets; the railway station and a newspaper office were burnt down; Botha and Smuts came to the Carlton Hotel, their lives seriously in danger, to negotiate with the strike leaders. The government and the mine-owners gave way. Within six months another strike threatened to become general. Commandos of the new Defence Force were then mobilised, order quickly restored, and the strike leaders deported to England without trial before their followers knew what was happening. The government obtained indemnity from Parliament for this irregular proceeding, but it lost ground in the country. The Labour Party got control of the Transvaal Provincial Council.

When the Great War was over the Rand was troubled again. Falling prices, in particular the price of gold in relation to currency, made it necessary for the mines to cut their costs if many of them were not to close down. Costs could be cut by increasing the proportion of Native workers. Out of this situation arose the strike of March, 1922, which winds blowing from Russia fanned into Revolution. The Council of Action at the head of the strikers included leading members of the new Communist Party. The exclusion of Natives from skilled work can hardly have been part of their policy. They aimed at social revolution and thought that the hour had struck. The rank and file of miners were now no longer Cornishmen but largely Afrikaners from the countryside, who knew as little of Marx as the old Graaff-Reinettters knew of Rousseau. But together these elements organised commandos, drilled and armed, and hoisted the Red Flag.

The government, rather belatedly, struck. Battle raged in the suburbs of Johannesburg and along the Reef. The revolt was crushed. The Chamber of Mines imposed its terms. The whole Labour movement turned bitterly against Smuts. Many of the Labour rank and file were Afrikaners, though the leaders were English. What more natural than that they should draw closer to Hertzog, who also demanded that "Smuts must go"?

Hertzog believed in white supremacy; so did Creswell. To achieve common aims they formed an electoral pact, the Nationalists agreeing to keep their secession policy in cold storage while the agreement lasted. The government, after losing a series of by-elections, went to the country in 1924 and was defeated. Smuts held 53 seats, the Nationalists gained 63 and Labour 18. Hertzog formed a joint Nationalist-Labour cabinet, the "Pact" government. The fall of the South African Party had not, after all, produced a pure and unadulterated Afrikaner ministry.

## CHAPTER XI

### RACE RELATIONS

THE relations between white men and black, during the greater part of South African history, can be expressed in military terms. But the long tradition of warfare across an ill-defined frontier did not cease to be an active force in politics after the last tribal warriors had suffered final defeat.

The advancing white settlement had pushed the Bantu back, but this process was not carried to its logical completion. It could not be, for the Natives continued to increase, and they had to live somewhere. The tide of white colonisation therefore swept round the rocky black islands on which the Natives crowded too densely for comfort. In these territories that remained to them they carried on as well as they could the old tribal life, with chiefs administering Native law and allotting land for the use of tribesmen. Traditionally, the chief owned the land in trust for the tribe. His powers of distribution remained, but the legal ownership passed to the white man's government in various forms. Over the chiefs the governments placed officials with superior authority, both administrative and judicial, and Parliament or Volksraad assumed powers of legislation. Generally speaking, the land in Native "reserves" and "locations" was protected against European encroachment.

The existence of the reserves indicates one aspect of the white man's policy, adopted from the beginning in colonies and republics: the safeguarding of European settlements against the flood of barbarians that would be overwhelming if no space were provided for it. On one side of a frontier, as in the days of the border wars, lay the white man's country; beyond were the hills of "Kaffirland".

Yet no European ever proposed that the whole Native population should be accommodated in reserves. Native policy had its other side, the provision of a labour supply for farmers and other employers. European colonisation had from the first been based on coloured labour, slave and Hottentot. In the



western parts of the Cape the "Cape Coloured" continued to supply the labour for farm and town, but elsewhere the Bantu were the only source. From their confined territories they were driven out by economic pressure, and looked to the white man for employment. Thus the farmers of the Eastern Province took on many who fled from starvation after the "suicide" of 1857, and those of the Free State were well provided for at the end of the Basuto wars, when Basutoland was too small to keep its people. Very often the Native did not have to move away to work; the European farm was superimposed on him where he stood. "My grandfather," says a petty chief in the Transvaal, "woke one morning at his own kraal and found a white man who said, 'You are living on my farm and you must work for me'."

It suited the pioneers well to have Native families living on their farms, so long as there were not too many of them. The Republic of Natalia in its short existence laid down a policy in this matter that was afterwards adopted by the other republics: no farm to have more than five Native families resident on it. In the South African Republic this law, like some others, was honoured mainly in the breach, but it stood on the statute-book as a reminder of the double aim of the authorities: enough Natives in white areas to provide labour, but not so many as to threaten the white man's control and supremacy. Further, in times of labour shortage, no farmer was to engross the available supply to the detriment of his neighbours.

In Natal the arrangements made by the Republic broke down during the interregnum between the British annexation and the setting up of an effective British administration. From north and south the Bantu poured into the delectable land where no Dingaan or even Panda could tyrannise. By 1845 there were 100,000 of them, and the Boer pioneers found themselves surrounded on their isolated farms or even jostled off them. Shepstone, without the help of a single soldier or policeman, persuaded these unwelcome immigrants to move into certain areas, scattered over the colony, which were set aside as locations for them. Yet every European farm retained its resident families.

The system that developed on the Natal and Transvaal farms, and to a smaller extent in the Free State and the Eastern Province, reminds students of the medieval manor. The heads of the resident Native families were obliged to labour for the farmer during a part of the year that varied from three to six months, and might be either a continuous period or a broken one extending over the year. Their dependants did occasional service too, the women in the house and the boys with the herds. In return these "labour tenants" were given land to cultivate for themselves and grazing rights on the farm for their stock.

Between this system and that of wage labourers, who were given food and quarters, old clothes and an occasional sheep (more rarely a small cash wage), there was a great variety of intermediate gradations. In the Orange River Colony after the Boer War the "half shares" system was common: the labourers cultivated the farmer's land and paid him half the crop. This system and labour tenancy sprang naturally from the circumstances of both white farmers and Natives. Both were accustomed to something like a subsistence economy and had no use for cash transactions. One wanted labour and the other land. So they came to an arrangement.

But at the same time there were white landowners with a different tradition and different needs. Speculators had bought up much of the land of Natal without occupying it. Uitlanders in the South African Republic, often through the medium of companies which might be offshoots of the mining companies, did the same. Individual farmers, Briton and Boer, often owned several farms, some of which would be unoccupied and might be in low-lying and malarial districts. When the Natives overflowed from the reserves on to these farms and on to Crown or government land, farmers, companies and governments took advantage of the circumstance to charge a rent. As such tenants crowded densely upon the farms, this was a profitable arrangement, often more profitable and always more dependable than working the land directly. "Kaffir-farming" seemed as though it might drive white occupants out of the countryside altogether, leaving only absentee landlords.

In the republics no Native might own land; he could occupy

it on any of the terms that have been described. In the British colonies, however, nothing but poverty prevented a Native from buying and occupying any farm whatever. And after the Boer War the Transvaal courts ruled that the same principle applied to that country. This was the position of Natives in regard to land and agricultural labour at the time of Union.

Before that date an inter-colonial commission on Native Affairs had sounded a note of warning to which the first government of the Union immediately gave heed. The spread of "Kaffir-farming", the increasing number of labour tenants and share-croppers, and the legal possibility of land-purchase by Natives all seemed to point to the extinction of the white race in rural areas. To avert this, limits had to be set to all these processes. Broadly speaking, the Natives Land Act of 1913 attempted to freeze the existing distribution of ownership as between the races (no European land to be sold to Natives or vice versa); to stop the share-cropping system in the Free State at once; and to put an end to cash tenancy ("Kaffir-farming") as the existing contracts ran out. Obviously so many tenants could not be removed without putting them somewhere else. The act was supposed to be a temporary measure, to be followed by a new demarcation of areas for Native ownership and occupancy, so that a complete segregation of black from white farmers could be achieved. Pending this demarcation, the Governor-General was given power to grant exemptions from the operation of the law.

When steps were taken to follow up this act as had been intended, an insuperable obstacle was met. While all European farmers were strong supporters of the principle of segregation, none would allow his own district to be included in the Native area. Though a commission had made recommendations, the government therefore refused to carry them through Parliament. But the Governor-General's dispensing power was used to allow acquisition by Natives, and also cash tenancy, in the areas which the commission had recommended. Moreover, the Supreme Court ruled that the act did not apply to the Cape Province. There were, therefore, several loopholes for escape from its harsh restrictions. But when Smuts fell in 1924 the promise of 1913 had not yet been fulfilled.

Up to about 1870 the reserves and the European farms together accounted for all the significant part of the Native population. The diamond fields then introduced a new factor, which was to increase in importance till it became the central question of "Native policy". The diamond diggers were skilled Europeans, mostly immigrants. They needed the services of unskilled labourers. The pressure in the reserves had become acute (one remembers the recent constriction of Basutoland), a tide of work-seekers was flowing towards the farms, and a part of it was naturally diverted to Kimberley. A trivial wage, for which no European would work, was quite enough to attract these men whose only alternative was the subsistence economy of villeinage on the farms. By accepting the small cash wage they could leave their families at home on the land, and return there shortly with guns and ammunition. As the individual white diggers gave place to companies, and ultimately to one big company, white men too became employees. But they did skilled work for which high wages had to be paid if competent men were to be attracted to it. Only Europeans, with their high standard of living, could do his work. Natives, with a low standard and willing to accept a low wage, could be obtained in any numbers for unskilled labour. Thus the coming together of two races at very different levels of civilisation in the same industry created a great gulf between the wages of skilled and of unskilled labour.

Johannesburg was the child of Kimberley, and the same dualism grew up on the gold as on the diamond mines. Between them they created the railway system, and that too distinguished between the high wages of the skilled and the low wages of the unskilled, between white and black. In the other jobs available to Natives in the towns—domestic service and the menial work in connection with incipient industries, local and central government, business—the standard set by mines and railways prevailed.

In the first instance these arrangements were the result of natural forces. But vested interests were created which thereafter struggled to resist these forces. A generation of Natives grew up in the towns and knew no other environment. It followed, though at a distance, the white man's way of life,

became conscious of new wants and needed money. It progressed from unskilled to semi-skilled work, and was on the way to acquire skill. These Natives came into conflict with various forces. In unskilled occupations they had to compete with the migrants whose homes and families and land were in the reserves, and who could accept a wage which would not support a family that had no other resources. Labour tenants from the farms, during their free time, came to town and left their families to cultivate their plots. These, too, could accept something less than a living wage.

On the other hand the fully urbanised Native who did skilled work, though he needed more money than his rustic brother, could accept a wage that would be too low to support a white family. The entry of such people into skilled occupations therefore threatened to oust Europeans from them altogether, or else reduce them to a barbarous standard of living. The skilled white workers formed trade unions, very largely for the purpose of meeting this danger. The strikes of 1913, 1914 and 1922 were concerned with it.

Outside the Cape Province the trade unions generally confined their membership to Europeans. When governments came to terms with the trade unions, therefore, they gave the organised white workers legal means of preserving their monopoly. The strike of 1922 precipitated important legislation. An Apprentices Act regulated apprenticeship in such a way as to require a standard of education which few Natives had a chance to attain. Two years later, just before the Smuts government fell, an Industrial Conciliation Act provided excellent machinery for negotiation between employers and workers, but it excluded "pass-bearing Natives" (almost all Natives outside the Cape) from its operation, and therefore from membership of trade unions recognised by the law. White workers could strike, though this act provided an alternative which made strikes rare after 1924; Native workers were prevented from striking by the Native Labour Regulation Act of 1911, which made it a criminal offence for them.

Another act of 1911 provided that certain skilled operations in the mines could be performed by Europeans only, but this touched a very small part of the industrial field. The industrial

"Colour Bar" was maintained less by direct legislative means than by trade unionism, differences of educational opportunity, and the preference of white employers for white workers where they were prevented from paying lower wages to Natives.

The Colour Bar acquired a new importance during the first decade of Union because of the sudden growth of secondary industries. Before 1914 these were insignificant in comparison with agriculture and mining. But the First World War cut South Africa off from many of her sources of imports, and gave the encouragement of a natural protection to local industries. The money value of industrial production increased nearly sixfold between 1911 and 1921 and the number of employees nearly trebled. The slump that followed, and helped to cause the strike of 1922, affected secondary industry as well as mining. The disappearance of the natural protection afforded by the war led industrialists to demand an adequate protective tariff. But this had not been introduced by 1924.

The complicated policy which these facts illustrate—the direction of Native labour to farm, mine and town, its exclusion from skilled work, and the retention in the reserves of all Natives whose labour was not needed elsewhere—gave rise to administrative problems which were dealt with largely by pass laws, methods of taxation and the regulation of Native residence in towns.

Pass laws, as we have seen, made their appearance very early in the Cape Colony. By requiring a travelling Hottentot to carry a pass Lord Caledon hoped to prevent vagrancy and to ensure a labour supply to the farmers. The fiftieth ordinance of 1828 abolished this system, and it never returned to the Cape Colony. Passes were indeed demanded of all persons entering or leaving the Transkeian Territories or British Bechuanaland, and as this rule was not in practice applied to Europeans there was in effect a Native pass law in those cases. But it was a light burden in comparison with what the republics imposed.

After 1902 the system in the ex-republics was revised, and then amounted to this: every Native man (but not woman) in the two colonies travelling from his home or place of employment had to carry a pass signed by his employer, his chief or an official. No railway ticket could be issued to him unless he

produced this pass. In the Orange River Colony he required a residential pass, showing that he was entitled to live and work where he did, even when not travelling. In the Transvaal a Native entering a town to look for work was given a temporary pass allowing him to do so, and when work was found his contract was registered on another pass. In the Transvaal, too, no Native man in an urban area could be abroad at night without a night pass signed by his employer. In Natal the system was simpler. Every Native employee who was not working on the farm where he resided had a permanent identification pass, and another was needed for entering or leaving Natal.

It will be seen that the pass system was designed to retain labour on the farms and the mines where it was wanted, to permit migration to the towns while excluding those who failed to find employment, to keep in the reserves those who were not wanted elsewhere, and to safeguard the white townspeople against criminals at night. In keeping with these principles, Natives who had reached a certain standard of education and who practised a skilled trade or profession, and with whom therefore farms, mines and police were not concerned, could claim exemption from these laws. They had, however, to carry a certificate to prove their exemption.

At various times in the nineteenth century the shortage of Native labour was acute, and the labour-supply aspect dominated the Native policy of various governments. One solution of this problem was to impose on the Natives in reserves a direct tax in money, which could be obtained only by working for Europeans. Thus was established, in the Cape and Natal, the hut tax. Huts were easy to assess, and the number possessed by a Native was an indication of the number of his wives and therefore his wealth. Squatters on Crown land in Natal paid a rent, hut tax being payable only in the reserves. In the Cape encouragement was given, especially by the Glen Grey Act of 1894, to tribal Natives to convert their communal land tenure into individual tenure on perpetual quit-rent. The quit-rent gave exemption from hut tax. When Natal tried to impose a poll-tax as well as the hut tax, the rebellion of 1906 broke out. But the principle of a poll tax, which touched every adult male Native wherever resident, was soon generally accepted as the

basis of direct taxation of Natives. This, and the growth of mines, industries and towns, drew the whole African population into the cash economy of the Europeans.

Lastly, the conditions of the industrial age led to special methods of controlling Natives in towns. The Land Act of 1913 did not apply to urban areas, where no restriction was placed on the ownership of real property. But the Natives (Urban Areas) Act of 1923 provided for restriction of occupation or residence. Municipal authorities were to set aside "locations" for Natives, to build houses for them to hire, to establish elected advisory boards in these locations, to confine Natives (with certain exceptions, notably those living with their employers) to residence in them, and were given powers to exclude unwanted Natives from the municipal areas.

Except for this last act, few of the restrictions described here applied to the Cape Province. Its exceptional position was due to the liberal legislation of the colonial period, and in particular to the franchise. The Cape franchise knew no Colour Bar, but was based on a valuation of property owned or occupied, or wages received; since 1892 on a higher value and a literacy test as well. After 1896 the parties in the Cape Colony were highly organised and fairly evenly balanced, and there were seven constituencies where the Native vote was enough to hold the balance between parties. This circumstance secured the Cape Natives against the discrimination shown elsewhere. But after 1910, though the Cape franchise remained, the balance of parties was altered and could no longer be decided by seven Cape constituencies. It is important to note that of the parties in the Cape Colony it was the Afrikaner Bond that showed the greater determination to capture the Native vote.

In Natal a handful of Natives was given the franchise, but on conditions so difficult that there was nothing that could be called a Native vote; in the republics the Natives were frankly excluded. In the reserves of the three northern provinces local administration was in the hands of the chiefs, subject to control by European magistrates. The Cape Colony, however, had never favoured the chiefs. They were in most areas effectively supplanted by magistrates, and the Glen Grey Act of 1894 began the process of associating with them the elected repre-



sentatives of the people. The district council thus established was ultimately reproduced in all the districts of the Transkei, where a General Council, partly elected by the district councils, was given advisory functions in all local matters, such as education, agriculture and roads. Something was done there to improve Native methods of farming. Agricultural schools were set up and demonstrators sent round the districts.

Education for Natives was provided mainly by missionary bodies, and, though their schools received government aid, attendance at them was neither free nor compulsory. Yet some progress was made. The proportion of Natives of school-going age who went to school rose between 1905 and 1925 from about 12 to about 21 per cent. In 1914 the South African Native College was founded at Fort Hare, in the Eastern Province, to provide university education for Africans. By 1924, therefore, the black race had made considerable progress towards civilisation, but suffered serious restrictions to its movements and to its social, economic and political opportunities.

South Africa's population includes two important Non-European groups which are not classed as Native or African. One is the Cape Coloured people, 8 per cent of the total. Living as they did mostly in the Western Province of the Cape they benefited by the liberal policy of that colony and were not discriminated against by law. Even in the other provinces they came to be exempted from the pass laws, though not to be granted the vote. They were not given the same educational advantages as the Europeans in any province, but their disabilities were mainly those which they shared with the poorest strata of the white population, together with the social discriminations which lay outside the sphere of public policy.

The other group is the Asiatic, which in practice means Indian. It came to Natal at the demand of the sugar planters, who in 1860 found that Native labour lacked the stability and persistence that sugar planting required. A reluctant Indian government gave its consent to the migration of indentured coolies (and their families) to Natal. At once the sugar industry, and with it the Garden Colony, flourished. When their contracts expired the coolies had the alternatives of return passages to India and land grants in Natal. They usually chose

to remain. They became market gardeners, waiters, domestic servants. They were followed to Natal by "passenger Indians", more prosperous men who paid their own passages and established themselves in wholesale and retail trade. These were commonly Gujarati-speaking Moslems from Bombay, whereas the indentured coolies were usually Hindus from Madras who spoke Tamil or Telegu.

As the Indian population grew and prospered the white Natalians took fright. Land and trade were passing into Indian hands. Even the franchise was not denied them. After the introduction of responsible government the colony took steps to limit the numbers and power of the Indians. The franchise was withdrawn from people "who (not being of European origin) are Natives or descendants in the male line of Natives of countries which have not hitherto possessed elective representative institutions founded on the Parliamentary Franchise". By this thinly disguised method the Indians, who now nearly equalled the Europeans of Natal in number, were deprived of the vote. Rioters at the Durban docks then tried to stop further immigration by preventing the passengers of two ships from landing. Subsidised immigration was in fact stopped, though indentured labourers continued to come at the expense of their employers till this too was stopped in 1911 by the government of India.

There were Indians in the Transvaal as well as Natal. They were absolutely excluded from the Free State, and the small numbers in the liberal Cape Colony constituted no problem. But the South African Republic had been compelled to admit them by the London Convention. After supporting Britain in the Boer War many returned to the Transvaal, but new immigrants were excluded by Milner. Those formerly resident could return. Over the measures taken to distinguish between these two classes the Indians fell foul of the government. M. K. Gandhi, who began his career in South Africa, led the Transvaal Indians in this struggle, and Smuts was his opponent. The Union Parliament dealt with the problem by prohibiting the migration of Indians from one province to another. Officials discriminated against them in the issue of trading licences and in other ways. They suffered also, like other Non-Europeans,

from social discrimination—in hotels, on trains—and in education.

Gandhi's principle of passive resistance was first practised in South Africa. He led a resisting band from Natal to the Transvaal. All were imprisoned. In 1914 Smuts and Gandhi ended this deadlock by an agreement on various minor questions, but the Indian problem was then overshadowed by the war. Fear of commercial competition from people with a low standard of living on the one hand, and resentment at all the restrictions on the other, were still acute when the government changed in 1924. But the Indians were little more than 2 per cent of the population.

The social and economic systems which this contact between races had produced weighed heavily on a part of the white population as well as on the other groups. As the country filled up, and new land ceased to be available, the old crude methods of farming became inadequate. Capital, machines and efficient organisation were needed on the land. To make matters worse, the Roman-Dutch principle of equal division among heirs cut many farms into pieces too small to work. Bad methods of cultivation, grass-burning and overstocking started erosion which began to turn fertile areas into desert. A class of landless men developed as *bywoners*, hangers-on of their wealthier neighbours, to whom they stood in a relation like that of the Native labour-tenants. The destruction of the Boer War carried the process further. Many families, almost all Afrikaner, were driven off the land altogether. Coming to the towns, they found themselves unfitted for skilled labour; in unskilled occupations they would have to compete with raw Natives, whose race and whose "Kaffir work" they despised. Among these "Poor Whites", for whom there seemed no place in South African society, hatred of the black race became more bitter than in other section of the people. They drifted into the urban slums, to live cheek by jowl with the depressed classes of all races and colours. Some were still *bywoners* on the farms; others woodcutters in the Knysna forest. The Dutch Reformed Church tried to rehabilitate such people by placing them in agricultural colonies of small-holders under strict control. But even this praiseworthy effort had limitations, as a considerable

number of the Poor Whites had degenerated both physically and mentally. The degeneration was partly a cause and partly a result of their condition.

This unfortunate class was politically as well as economically outcast. A large proportion of the National Scouts of 1901 was drawn from it. In 1924 its resentment was to be vented against the Smuts government. Had not the Pact promised a "white labour policy"?

## CHAPTER XII

### HERTZOG

FROM 1924 to the outbreak of the Second World War General Hertzog was Prime Minister of the Union. In world history that period is divided sharply by the depression which began at the end of 1929 and spread wider and deeper in the following years. South Africa, too, was affected by it both economically and politically. The year in which Hitler came to power in Germany, and the United States turned to Roosevelt and the New Deal, produced in South Africa a coalition government; that led, under circumstances that will presently be seen, to a fusion of the main political parties. But Hertzog remained, and 1933 marked no profound revolution in policy. The old aims were still pursued, though under cover of a new banner. The period can therefore be treated as a continuous whole.

The Nationalists, who were the predominant partners in the Pact Government, had two principal lines of policy in view. One was to bring the constitution and the machinery of state into line with their own national aspirations, short of the republic which the terms of the past forbade; the other, to "solve the Native problem".

Among the factors which had inclined the electorate towards the Pact candidates had been the census report of 1921, which had given an alarming interpretation of the figures for the Native population. It appeared that the Bantu were increasing a good deal faster than the Europeans. Later censuses have not shown the alarm to be justified; but at the time the danger assumed even larger proportions in the popular than in the official mind. Fears that the white population would in time be engulfed in a black flood played a large part in shaping government policy and in securing public support for it. Hertzog determined to secure the dominance of the white man against every threat from the black.

The main principles of his policy were embodied in a series of bills introduced quite early in the life of the new government.

But reference to select committees and obstruction in the Senate held them up for ten years. It was not till 1936, under changed political circumstances and after much modification, that they were passed. Opposition to such policies now came from a new quarter. In 1916 F. S. Malan had fathered an Act to establish universities. On the foundation of the old colleges he built two (soon increased to four) teaching universities, as well as a federal examining university that incorporated the remaining colleges. Some of these catered for the Afrikaner, some for the English-speaking population. In the latter group, and to a slight extent in the others, the liberal spirit of eighteenth century philanthropists, nineteenth century missionaries and enlightened Cape politicians blossomed into new life. Here the ancient race prejudices encountered the most persistent opposition.

The famous bills and many of the speeches about them were the product of experiences and prejudices reaching far back into history, yet recognised by many people in 1936, and by still more today, to be largely irrelevant to modern conditions. The basis of Hertzog's policy was Segregation, which has been called a "magic word" in South African politics. A century earlier the Natal republicans had limited the number of Native families allowed to live and work on European farms, and had tried to hold back the rest of Bantu Africa at a boundary line. Natives had for generations been regarded as foreign enemies whose penetrations into the white man's land were hostile and should be punished. Even in the modern cities they were thought of as birds of passage who came from "the reserves" for a season, and returned there to bask in the sun when their purses were full. For many years this opinion accorded with the fact. The Native was thought of as a foreign visitor, not a part of the white man's society.

Hertzog's policy was to give a comprehensive legal basis to this exclusion of the black man from the white man's world. Within the limits of the segregation policy he was anxious to be just to the black man. An extension of the reserves in which Natives could own and occupy land had been promised in 1913, but never undertaken. The Native Trust and Land Act "released" additional areas, established a Trust with power to

buy land in them and to own it in trust for the Africans. Much of the land so acquired was Crown and company land already occupied by them as cash tenants, so that there was not in fact a significant extension of the land in Native occupation. Even when all the released areas had been acquired for this purpose, the Natives, two-thirds of the population, would have no more than one-eighth of the surface of the Union.

Most of this, it is true, lay in the more fertile and better watered parts of the country, and it was estimated at the time that the reserves with the new areas contained about 56 per cent of the Native population; while 30 per cent lived on European farms, and the rest in the towns. But these figures were deceptive. The reserves could not support the primitive peasant population which the revenue officers attributed to them. About half the adult males of the Transkei were, at any one time, absent from that territory earning money elsewhere. While more state expenditure on the agricultural and industrial development of the reserves might have stopped this migration and the disruption of families, it was not practical politics: it would have cut down the labour supply which European employers already thought insufficient.

The Native Trust and Land Act was, therefore, a belated tribute to the tradition that black and white should live apart. While it sought to carry out a promise made in 1913, it aimed also at a stricter enforcement of some of the principles of the act of that year. The 1913 act had tried to stop cash tenancy, but had left loopholes; it had not touched labour tenancy. Yet laws limiting the number of labour tenant families to five had been on the statute book, and had been regularly broken, for decades. In 1936 the government was given power to eliminate "squatters" or cash tenants by a system of registration, licences and a rising scale of fees; and to allow as labour tenants only those who worked at least half the year for the farmer. This would mean driving many families off European farms, and increasing the services of most labour tenants by 50 per cent, while it was notorious that the reserves and the released areas had no room for more. In due course this provision of the Act was applied, by proclamation, to one district of the Transvaal. After a few years' trial the policy was found to be unworkable,

and the proclamation withdrawn. That is the best postscript, to date, on this Act.

Much more controversial were Hertzog's political arrangements. To him and to most other white South Africans it seemed that the advances made by the Africans in civilisation would before very long make them a majority of the electorate in the Cape Province. Before such a force the whole system of defences set up by the white man would collapse. The Cape franchise had therefore to be attacked. In face of vehement resistance by Native leaders and European liberals the original measure was watered down. Natives in the Cape Province retained the old franchise, but not on a common roll with Europeans. The Natives were formed into separate constituencies to return three members to the House of Assembly and two to the Cape Provincial Council. The Coloured people of that province remained on the same roll as the white; in everything but social intercourse Hertzog classed them with the Europeans.

Next, the Natives of the whole country, including the Cape, were given a complicated system of indirect election by which they returned four senators, in addition, of course, to the four nominated senators who were supposed to represent their interests. Lastly there was the Native Representative Council, whose elected members were chosen by the same method as the four senators. This Council was to be a purely advisory body; its elected members, unlike those in the two houses of Parliament, were to be Natives.

The Native Representative Council had, before long, to complain that no notice was taken of its advice. The new parliamentary representatives, however, were a great gain to the political life of the country. They were drawn, as was natural under the circumstances, from the most liberal, humane and highly educated class of Europeans in South Africa. Yet some of them have said that the best service they can render is to abolish the system under which they have been elected. The system is one more aspect of the segregation principle which has broken down in the economic sphere. Whether it could or should be retained in politics was a disputed point (and destined to be still more hotly disputed) in 1939.



The policy of which these acts were the most dramatic expression was the basis of many other measures also. Special courts were set up to administer Native law in cases where it applied. The power of legislating for the Native areas was given by Parliament to the government. This was not a "new despotism", since ministers are, as a rule, more sympathetic to Native demands than the European public or its immediate representatives. But another measure, passed at the beginning of the Hertzog period, produced an angry reaction from the Africans and came to be regarded by them as a symbol of oppression. It was popularly known as the "Colour Bar Act"; securing the existing monopoly of skilled operations to white workers in the mines, it provided for an extension of this principle to other industries by proclamation. In fact, the powers given have not been used. The Colour Bar, as we have seen, has been maintained by other means.

This applied to skilled operations. But the government wanted to solve the Poor White problem by introducing Europeans to unskilled labour. This it could do directly on the railways and other state enterprises. Its "civilised labour policy" was imposed also on the provinces and local authorities, and indirect pressure was applied to private employers to bring them into line. White labourers in considerable numbers then took the place of Natives, though they were not, of course, paid at Native rates. State subsidies were given to municipalities to cover some of the difference in wages between white and black unskilled labour.

Segregation for the Natives, and legal equality with the whites for the Cape Coloured, left a third racial problem to be dealt with: the Asiatics. An attempt was made to apply the segregation principle to them also. The proposal in this case provoked opposition from something more powerful than a racial minority in South Africa: opposition from the Indian government. A conference met and the Cape Town agreement was made. The bills were dropped, and an undertaking given to help the South African Indians to raise their standards of living and of civilisation. The Indian government was to assist in the repatriation to India of such of its people as were willing to leave South Africa, and to appoint an Agent-General

in the Union. The contact of South African society with the cultured men, who successively filled this office had an important effect on the opinions of many. A little was done to honour the terms of the agreement. And there the Indian "problem" remained till after 1939.

Fundamental as these questions of race and colour are, they attracted less attention from politicians and public on either side than the "national" question. This had many aspects, and the handling of it passed through phases in which subtle but important differences of emphasis can be detected.

Most Afrikaners in 1924 still suffered from a sense of inferiority in the presence of the English. Their language and culture were new and were often treated with contempt. The defeat of 1902 and the support given to Britain in 1914, not to mention all the grievances of the nineteenth century, still rankled. Afrikaners felt themselves to be a defeated nation which had to retrieve its lost independence and to show the world that the defeat had been wiped out. South Africa, they thought, was their country; yet its governments in the past had imposed alien forms on the people and compelled them to serve foreign interests. They could not hold up their heads in their own land.

A minority of Afrikaners, which supported the South African Party, did not share these emotions. But it was now in opposition. The Nationalists had their opportunity. One by one they removed the symbols of the British connection, and in various spheres of power raised their own people to dominant positions. New postage stamps appeared, and the King's head was not in the design. The House of Assembly requested the King to confer no more titles on South Africans. The Afrikaans language took the place of Dutch for official and educational purposes, and its literature entered a new period of rapid development. Its equality with English in official use was rigidly insisted on; municipalities as well as Union departments were made to conform to the rule. Civil servants, even those who had no contact with the public, were required to be fully bilingual. As the Afrikaners were generally better qualified in this respect than the English, their numbers increased rapidly in a service that had formerly been left to English-speaking and

often unilingual men. Before long it began to look, to the latter, like an Afrikaner preserve.

These Afrikaners, who at last were coming into their own—were they an independent nation? Hertzog's main concern was to be able to give them that assurance, and he went to the Imperial Conference of 1926 determined to get it. He played a leading part in drafting the Balfour declaration, which, putting into words what had been a matter of practice since the war, defined Britain and the Dominions as "autonomous communities within the British Empire, equal in status, in no way subordinate one to another in any aspect of their domestic or external affairs, though united by a common allegiance to the Crown, and freely associated as members of the British Commonwealth of Nations".

Hertzog came home to tell his people that this meant full, unfettered independence. That being so, he was content to retain the common allegiance as long as it was in South Africa's interest to do so. In 1931 the Statute of Westminster gave legal sanction to the principle of the Balfour declaration, and three years later the Union Parliament passed a similar act to establish the principle in South African law. The status of the Union was then different from what it had been before 1926, when the Imperial Parliament still had the theoretical right to apply legislation to the Dominions; when the Governor-General, who could refuse his assent to bills, represented the British government and received instructions from it; when the King acted in the name of the whole Empire, but on the advice of his British ministers only; when the Union had no power of extra-territorial legislation or control over foreign relations. Now the Governor-General came to be the personal representative of the King, who appointed him on the advice of the South African ministry. The British government was represented by a High Commissioner, distinct from the Governor-General. The Union could legislate extra-territorially, appoint ministers to foreign capitals and otherwise act as an independent state. The common allegiance to the King, and the common status of the people as British subjects, remained.

As soon as the Balfour declaration had given the Nationalists the status they wanted, they began to devise outward forms to

advertise it. The Union must have its distinctive flag, and its people a nationality distinct from that of British subjects. When it appeared that the flag was to have no Union Jack in its design, there occurred among the British South Africans an outburst of bitter hostility which would seem strange to one who was ignorant of their historical background. A flag was a mere symbol, a piece of bunting; the bitterness was aroused really by the changes in the balance of power, and in the political tendency of the country, which the new flag was to symbolise. The government paused in its advance, and agreed to a compromise: a small Union Jack, with the banners of the old republics, was placed in the centre of the flag; and in addition to the national emblem the Union Jack would be flown officially to symbolise membership of the Commonwealth. There were two languages, two capitals, two flags and two nationalities. All "South African nationals" were still British subjects, while British immigrants acquired South African nationality by a period of residence.

In the later phase of Hertzog's government there were more disputes of the same kind. The Union Jack was one of the official flags, but attempts were made to cut down the list of occasions on which it could be flown. *God Save the King* was not to be regarded as the national anthem, a rôle reserved for *Die Stem van Suid-Afrika*. Place-names were changed. Roberts Heights, the military headquarters outside Pretoria, was a reminder of the Field-Marshal who defeated the Boers; it was to be changed to Voortrekkerhoogte. Again an outcry, and a compromise: different names for the military college, the post-office and the railway station. A South African, though English-speaking and British-born, was appointed Governor-General. His successor would be of Afrikaner descent and South African-born.

Much of this nationalising policy was regarded with tolerance by the moderate section of the British. The Afrikaners and their language had occupied an inferior position in the state, and an advance on their part would seem to be due. And many Afrikaners, even among the Nationalists, felt that they had now been given their due. Why should the two white races quarrel any more?

In 1929 Smuts made a speech referring to the ultimate amalgamation of the Union with territories to the North. The Nationalists took this as a threat to drown the white race in a black flood. Their "Black Manifesto" enabled them at the general election to gain an absolute majority in the House of Assembly. Labour was eclipsed. It was largely discredited among the British by its pact with Nationalism, while the Afrikaner workers tended to support the latter party. The fortunes of Nationalism reached their zenith; yet even in that election, it is important to note, they polled fewer votes in the aggregate than the South African Party.

Then came the depression. Britain went off the gold standard in 1931. South African farmers, whose best customer was Britain, received lower prices for their products. The gold mines found their margin of profit severely cut. Unemployment and bankruptcy mounted. Speculators, convinced that the Union must go off gold, sent their money abroad, to bring it back when the exchange rates had altered. Yet the government stuck to its guns. There were some, in South Africa as elsewhere, who felt that to devalue the currency was to break faith with creditors. But the essential motive of Hertzog and of Havenga, the Minister of Finance, was political. If South Africa should devalue merely because Britain had done so, what became of sovereign independence? Here was the chance to prove that Afrikaners were masters in their own house. Unfortunately for Hertzog, his followers in the countryside were not prepared to destroy themselves economically even for this ideal. Smuts had a heaven-sent opportunity to sweep the government out of office. Hertzog said he would rather resign than yield on the gold question. Tielman Roos, a judge and former Nationalist minister, returned to the political arena with the cry that the gold standard must be abandoned. Such a political portent, with all its disturbing economic effects, was decisive. At the end of 1932 the Union went off gold; but Hertzog did not resign.

Smuts, who had the premiership within his grasp, now rose above the level of party politics. He offered to serve under Hertzog in a coalition. After much manœuvring Hertzog accepted the outstretched hand. An opportunity had come to

bury the outworn hatchet of racial strife and bring the parties and nationalities together. The coalition government went to the country and swept it almost clean of opposition. The tide of prosperity rose, as a result of the devaluation, with tremendous force. Mines, farms and factories flourished with an activity never before known. Johannesburg, the mushroom city, grew so rapidly outwards and upwards that its appearance changed more radically in four or five years than it had in the previous forty.

The atmosphere was favourable for a further development, the fusion of the two great parties. Thus was born the United South African National Party—United Party for short—which in 1938 gained an overwhelming majority in the elections. Many believed that the day of racial peace, so often heralded by false dawns, had broken at last. But even in 1938 there were signs that this might not be so.

The constitution and aims of the United Party were so similar to those of the old Nationalists that it took an acute eye to distinguish between them. Some of the British supporters of the South African Party thought that fusion meant nothing less than the complete triumph of all that they had opposed since Briton and Boer had first come into conflict. Unable to accept it, they walked out and formed the Dominion Party, successor to the Progressives and Unionists of former days. But for various reasons this got little support among the British. Being a national minority—about 40 per cent of the white population—they knew that their salvation depended on co-operation with a section of the Afrikaners. A purely British party could never hope for power. Secondly, the issue on which the Dominion Party took its stand was one that gave it a poor case. It fought against the independent status of the Union, which had been established by the Mother of Parliaments herself. Hair-splitting about the divisibility and indivisibility of the Crown meant nothing to the electors. Thirdly, a section of the Nationalists—much bigger than the Dominion Party—also rejected fusion. Thus Hertzog might be not so bad after all.

After the breakdown of intricate negotiations, Dr. D. F. Malan (not to be confused with F. S. Malan), leader of the Cape Nationalists, broke away from Hertzog and spurned the

fusion movement. With his followers he formed the "Purified" Nationalist Party, and became, to the amusement of many, the leader of "His Majesty's Opposition".

Behind the feud between Hertzog and Malan, and the uneasy alliance between Hertzog, Smuts and the British, lay differences of outlook which are easily recognised by those familiar with the past. The Hertzog-Smuts alliance was full of misunderstandings, suspicions and agreements-to-differ which it was hoped time would heal. Hertzog, throughout his career, had firmly defended the equality of the Afrikaans and English languages, and the equal rights of Boer and Briton to share in political power and the benefits of government. Of the British he asked one thing: to "feel as Afrikaners" and forget their ties with their mother-country. He did not understand how big a thing this was. But within the limits of an exclusive South African allegiance he was scrupulously just. On this basis the British supported, though with some misgivings, the United Party.

The Afrikaners of the "purified" party were of a different opinion. The iron of defeat and inferiority had eaten more deeply into their souls. They would be satisfied with nothing less than a purely Afrikaner state in which the English and their language could remain only on sufferance. All the compromises on constitution, language, status and the rest they treated as mere temporising measures to be swept away as occasion offered. They were not hopeful, as Hertzog was, of "converting" the English. Any contact with the English they thought dangerous to the survival of their own culture and way of life. They had the feeling, which arose from experience in history, that the Englishman always outwitted the Afrikaner and undermined his exclusive allegiance to his own national tradition. They were deeply influenced, too, by the Calvinist principles of their religion. The doctrine of predestination combined with a belief in the curse on the children of Ham to suggest that the Elect could be identified by their white skins; with more certainty, by their use of the Afrikaans language; with more certainty still, by their profession of the Nationalist ideology. It would be impossible to understand the Nationalist point of view without feeling the force of this Calvinist idea,

overflowing from religion into politics, of an eternal distinction between Saved and Damned.

The influence of this idea was felt beyond as well as within the field of politics. Afrikaners seceded from the Boy Scout organisation and formed one of their own called the Voortrekkers. The National Union of South African Students was broken, Nationalist students forming a separate body. The same tendency appeared in the trade union world. Then it spread to business. The Afrikaners in the towns, once a very small minority, were by 1936 about as numerous as their cousins in the country. But they came to the towns as refugees from a farming industry that could no longer support them. They had to start at the bottom of the ladder, the upper rungs of which were all occupied by the British. Afrikaans was spoken in the poorest quarters of the cities, English in the more prosperous. To remedy this, Nationalists organised to give financial backing to Afrikaners setting up in business; banks, insurance societies, industries of every sort, shops and wholesale warehouses with a Nationalist political bias arose. So did separate social, sporting and cultural organisations. All these were integrated together, one supporting another. Consumers and employees, all Afrikaner, were drawn into the system, which aimed at Afrikaner independence of the "British money power" which had vigorously survived the breakdown of the old-fashioned Empire.

That this movement greatly helped the Afrikaners in the process of urbanisation and on the road to prosperity will probably be marked to its credit by future historians. But it is equally true that its greatest object was to withdraw the Afrikaner from contact with the British. It was a new phase of the Great Trek, a "withdrawal into the interior" on a new plane, a turning of the back on the ever-dreaded Uitlander and his ways.

The movement had begun before 1938, but in that year it was given an immense impetus by the celebrations to honour the centenary of the Trek. This was no casual act of respect to the calendar, but an elaborate and heart-stirring pageantry in which the special history of the Afrikaner nation was enacted again to revive and strengthen the self-conscious unity of the



people. Out of the pageantry was born the *Ossewa-Brandwag*, the ox-wagon guard, which began as a cultural organisation but soon became a disciplined political phalanx on the Nazi pattern.

From this unity the British were excluded. Nor would they have had it otherwise. Their aim and hope had always been unity on an individual basis, with everyone pursuing cultural aims, wealth and political power according to fair and equal rules. Into the mystic unity of an exclusive Afrikaner *volk* with its special historical self-consciousness they could not and would not enter. Hertzog expected them ultimately to do so, and particularly to break their sentimental ties with Britain. But this they could not do either.

Had Whitehall retained some control over the Union, it is possible that Britain and Boer would have been united, in opposition perhaps to the negrophilist policies of British governments. But precisely because that control had long been no more than nominal, and Hertzog had laid even its ghost, there was no point at which the British of South Africa and those of Britain could possibly conflict. On the other hand Afrikaner nationalism was the traditional enemy of the British South Africans. Having yielded with the best grace they could before its steady advances, they were now faced with a party whose avowed aim was to reduce them, their language and traditions to a position of inferiority and dependence in South Africa. The natural effect was to strengthen their sentimental bonds with their mother-country, and to make them cling to the imperial connection, tenuous as it was, as to a life-line. The British, too, being concentrated in the cities (nearly three-quarters of them in the big towns) were keenly aware of the contacts with the outside world which pervaded their social, cultural, political and business life. So had the Dutch of eighteenth-century Cape Town been, when their country cousins were turning their backs on Europe. Thus these metropolitan-feeling citizens not only felt distaste for what was provincial and of the earth earthy, but were repelled by the suspicious, defensive, inward-turning and circumscribed mentality of the Nationalists. Many of the Afrikaners shared this repulsion. But in 1938 it was not clear how far such feelings had spread.

The centenary, the creation of separate Afrikaner organisations in every sphere of life and their integration together strengthened Malan's rather than Hertzog's hand in politics. The tide of history seemed to be flowing now towards the Afrikaner-dominated and exclusive republic of which the Nationalists dreamed. Yet the Nationalist party, when undivided and at the height of its power, had failed to secure a majority of the popular votes. How could it do so against Hertzog and Smuts together?

This difficulty, the problems inherent in an exclusive and doctrinaire régime and the course of events in Europe all helped to turn the thoughts of Nationalists away from the parliamentary system and towards the new ideology of Germany and Italy. Anti-semitism, hitherto unknown to the Afrikaner, sprang into being, encouraged perhaps by the fact that the hated "money power" was Jewish as well as British. The Jews, a very small minority of the population, were largely concentrated in Johannesburg and Cape Town and were conspicuous in business and the professions. They, too, seemed an obstacle in the way of the pure Afrikaner republic.

Curiously enough, Hertzog and some of his followers in the United Party were likewise dazzled by the brilliance of Nazism. Not only were the German race-theories very convenient in a country with the structure of South Africa, but the bitter attacks of Malan had caused Hertzog to lose faith in the party system itself, and to grope about for an alternative. Pirow, Minister of Defence and a man of German descent, has since admitted that he was a National Socialist before the war, and he became one openly when it began.

These tendencies were alarming not only to the whole English-speaking population, and to those Non-Europeans who knew what they meant, but to a great many United Party Afrikaners, former Nationalists as well as former "Saps". Some of them publicly denounced the Fascist propaganda that the Italian Minister was allowed to spread.

The political trend in a Nazi-Fascist direction gave, for some people, a sinister meaning to the favourable trade agreements with Italy and Germany. When the city of Port Elizabeth accepted a British tender, though a lower tender had been

received from a German firm, Hertzog tried to force it to change its mind. The mayor stood firm and Hertzog apologised to the German Minister. He severely reprimanded newspapers for attacks on Hitler.

Such was the background of the final crisis. For South Africa, as for the world, it might have come in 1938. When war seemed likely over Sudetenland, the Prime Minister proposed to the cabinet a policy of neutrality, and even Smuts was constrained to accept it. Sudetenland, after all, was a German-speaking country, and it could still be maintained that Hitler wanted no more than the unity of all Germans. South Africa, with its hair-trigger animosities and its memories of 1914, could not dare to treat this as a *casus belli*.

The invasion of Czecho-Slovakia changed the situation. Some of the British section in South Africa wondered why the Nationalists did not think of Germany as playing the part of Britain in 1899, and Czecho-Slovakia in the rôle of the Boer republics. They did not, because Britain was Britain and Germany was Germany; because they felt some sympathy with the German régime; because of 1914; because of the Kaiser's telegram to Kruger; because some of them, it was said, could "not see past an Englishman".

When, after all the preliminaries, Britain declared war on September 3, 1939, a strange chance decreed that the Union Parliament was due to meet in special session the next day to prolong the life of the Senate. Had this not happened, Hertzog might not have consulted Parliament on the critical decision he was to make. On receiving the news from England he met his cabinet and proposed a policy of neutrality for the Union. Smuts opposed him and spoke for war against Germany. The cabinet split, six for neutrality and seven for war. The fusion government, then, had come to an end, but it would rest with the House of Assembly to give power to one faction or the other.

As a matter of course, the Dominion Party would be for war; so would Labour, but a small remnant of its former self; and Malan's much bigger party would be for neutrality. But the decision rested with the United Party members, the great bulk of the House but no longer united or disciplined. The

vital question would be decided, outside the small parties, by a free vote. The debate, which would be dramatic in any circumstances, was made doubly so by the knowledge that speeches could sway votes, and any convert might decide the issue.

Hertzog and some parliamentary experts expected a small majority for neutrality. The Prime Minister spoke. As he warmed up he turned from the neutrality question to a defence of Germany, the Germany of Versailles and now of Hitler. He, too, the Prime Minister said, had known the bitterness of defeat. What Germany was doing was merely to wipe out the stain of 1919. At this point, according to later calculations, a small number of Hertzog's followers determined to vote against him.

Smuts spoke, and others spoke, for the cause of freedom and democracy. They denounced the tyranny of Nazism. Mr. Nicholls thought that South Africa was automatically at war when it was declared by Great Britain, so that the debate was unnecessary. At this point, it has been thought, several members who were for war may have decided to support Hertzog, since South Africa's independence had to be vindicated.

Mr. Long saw the danger and got up to repudiate Mr. Nicholls' views. While defending the sovereignty of the Union Parliament, he pleaded for support of the democracies against Nazism. All day the battle continued, while the public outside waited in a state of extreme tension. The loyalty of the British to the Crown and to their own wider world, their feeling that Britain was their own mainstay in an immediately hostile environment, and that if Britain fell in the world they themselves would collapse in South Africa, was countered by a Nationalist hope that the fall of Britain would give the Afrikaners unlimited domination of the Union. More, they had for years believed in Hertzog's achievement of independence, and now that achievement would be tested. Unless South Africa could go a different way from England, there was no independence. The answer had been unfavourable in 1932, on the currency question, but this war issue would finally decide whether anything had changed since 1914. Beyond these considerations lay the attitudes to Nazism itself. Many were inclined in its favour. Many, Briton and Boer, were steadily

devoted to the democratic ideal and saw Hitler as the greatest menace in the world.

At nine o'clock in the evening the house divided. Hertzog's motion was defeated by 80 votes to 67. He played one more card; he appealed to the Governor-General for a dissolution. The latter's decision has become an interesting point in constitutional history, but at the time it was of much more than academic interest: he refused to dissolve, and called Smuts to power. War was declared on Germany.

The supporters of the new government were strong enough to capture the machinery and retain the name of the United Party. It was more than the old South African Party, since it was supported by some in Parliament, and many outside, who had been Nationalists before 1934. The war government, however, was a coalition in which the small Dominion and Labour parties shared. Hertzog's supporters went over to the Opposition benches where Malan's party was firmly established. The two leaders had, however, abused each other so bitterly that their partnership could hardly be cordial. And they continued to differ on principle. Even amid the bitter passions of the war Hertzog insisted on equal rights for British and Afrikaners. When the two sections of the Opposition met to merge their identities in the Reunited National Party, Hertzog put forward his programme as a basis. The meeting refused to discuss it. Afrikaner domination was to be the avowed policy of the party. Hertzog walked out. He resigned his seat in Parliament. Now, as in 1912, he was a voice crying in the wilderness. His life had run its allotted span. And thus, while the world heard only the clash of arms, Hertzog and his era passed away.

## EPILOGUE

THE history of South Africa since 1939 is too close, and too intimately bound up with controversies still raging, to be seen yet in historical perspective. But the reader who has followed the story to the outbreak of the war, and the dramatic fall of Hertzog, will expect some explanation of the more recent operation of the forces whose earlier development has been discussed here.

The government formed by General Smuts in 1939 was a coalition, in which the small Labour and Dominion parties shared power and responsibility with the United party. At the end of the war this coalition broke up; it had been held together by the common interest of the parties in prosecuting the struggle. In some countries a war coalition commonly represents the whole of a united nation, but it was not so in South Africa. The government faced, in Parliament and in the country, a strong opposition which preached neutrality and openly sympathised with the enemy. The profound division of the country was vividly apparent.

The Union sent two divisions to North Africa; they fought in Abyssinia and in Libya till after Alamein. These were then withdrawn and a third division took part in the invasion of Italy. All the armed forces consisted of volunteers, since conscription would not have been possible under the prevailing circumstances. The volunteers, and the civilian supporters of the government, were drawn from all the racial and national sections of the population. Some gave their support because they understood the issues at stake, and ranged themselves on the side of democracy; some because by tradition and habit they were political supporters of Smuts; some out of simple patriotism; some because they were carried along by the tide of their friends; some because the army offered a good job. Corresponding to these motives were opposite ones which provided the strength of the opposition.

The political sentiments and principles on that side provoked many to indulge in sabotage or to give information to the

enemy, and in Nationalist areas it was often dangerous for soldiers to appear in uniform; their wives and families, if living in the wrong political environment, were often boycotted or persecuted. But 1914 was not repeated; there was no rebellion. At times when the allied cause seemed hopeless, there were many who said that only a German victory would enable national Afrikanerdom to realise its hopes; but such opinions were expressed without hindrance, and men convicted of treason or sabotage were punished only by imprisonment. No death sentence was carried out.

While the political world was divided into pro-war and anti-war camps, each side was in other respects heterogeneous. It is these domestic differences that are of the greatest interest now, for the light they throw on later events. While the war was being fought, the supporters of the government preserved a united front. The opposition, being free of responsibility, could afford to air its differences in public.

During the first year of war the followers of Hertzog and of Malan were ranged under a common banner and appeared to be on the way to a complete fusion. Yet they were divided on questions of principle, in their personal loyalties and by the memory of their mutual recriminations of 1934-9. Before the end of 1940 the conflict broke out. Hertzog submitted his programme to the Free State Nationalist Congress; it was rejected; Hertzog and his few loyal supporters walked out. The *Herenigde Nasionale Party* (Reunited National Party) in all provinces adopted the Malanite programme, which provided for the language and cultural, but not political, rights of the English-speaking section, and for the attainment of a republic by a simple majority in Parliament. Most of the former Hertzogites accepted Malan and his programme and parted company with their old leader. Hertzog and his principal lieutenant, Havenga, resigned their seats and retired to their farms.

In 1941 the Hertzogites who remained in Parliament formed a new party, the Afrikaner party, dedicated to Hertzog's principles. The party possessed one daily newspaper, but had little other support. But there was another and more important rival to Malan's party among the Afrikaner people—the Ossewabrandwag, or O.B. This, as we have seen, was formed in

1938 as a cultural movement inspired by the emotions of the Great Trek centenary. It was given a new impetus by the war and by its new leader, Dr. J. F. van Rensburg, ex-Administrator of the Free State. Under his leadership it became an avowedly National-Socialist organisation, working for a totalitarian republic and the abolition of the party system. An agreement had been reached in October, 1940, by which the H.N.P. was to be the organ of Afrikanerdom in the political sphere, and the O.B. its organ outside that sphere. The delimitation of spheres was, however, unworkable. In June, 1941, a joint committee on which both the party and the O.B. were represented adopted a draft constitution for the future republic, a constitution whose authoritarian character was partly a reflection of the German victories. Following a misunderstanding of what had been said at the committee meeting, the O.B. disseminated 100,000 copies of this constitution and worked publicly for its acceptance. Thus it was poaching on the grounds reserved for the party.

From this beginning the rift between the H.N.P. and the O.B. steadily widened, till at last Malan forbade members of the former to belong to the latter; many had hitherto belonged to both. Both organisations were anti-war, republican and exclusively Afrikaans; but the H.N.P. supported the parliamentary and party system, which the O.B. denounced, and the division was sharpened by personal loyalties to the leader on either side. And in Parliament there was another secession from the H.N.P., led by Oswald Pirow, former Minister of Defence. He formed the New Order Group, no less National-Socialist than the O.B., yet remaining distinct from it.

In July, 1943, the first general election since before the war tested the state of public opinion. The verdict of the electorate was about two to one in favour of the government; its majority in Parliament rose from 21 to 64, or 67 if the Native representatives are included. On the long view, the H.N.P. had as much reason for satisfaction as the government. The O.B. had played no direct part in the election. Nor had the New Order, as such, though some of its members had stood as independents. But all these, and all the Afrikaner party candidates, were eliminated. The H.N.P. strength in the House of Assembly



actually rose from 41 to 43, and it now constituted the sole parliamentary opposition.

With the end of the war, and the break-up of the government coalition, politics entered a new phase, in which nevertheless the old forces can still be recognised.

Each of the three parties that had formed the coalition was divided within itself; in all cases the division was caused by the question of the coloured races. The latent conflict was forced into the open by a government bill of 1946, which established residential segregation for Asiatics in Natal and the Transvaal, but gave the people of this race communal representation in Parliament and the Natal Provincial Council, on the lines of the Native representation of 1936. The Indians fiercely opposed the whole measure. Some European liberals did likewise, while others were for accepting the representation and opposing the segregation. What might be called the right wing of each party took the opposite view; it supported the segregation and rejected the representation. The Bill was passed, but the electoral part of it was never put into operation.

On this issue the Labour party split. The right wing was represented by its leader, Walter Madeley, but he was opposed by the bulk of the members; Labour came down on the moderately liberal side and the anti-Indian elements were ejected. The next year it was the turn of the Dominion party. Its leader, too, was on the right wing; he kept his party organisation with him, changed its name to the South African party, and the liberals resigned. The United party did not split, but its liberal and anti-liberal elements remained in uneasy alliance.

Many parties and groups sought the favour of the electorate in May, 1948. The Afrikaner party, which had appeared to collapse in 1943, acquired a new strength by admitting members of the Ossewabrandwag to its ranks. These people were of course excluded from membership of the H.N.P., and since the O.B. did not function in the parliamentary field they had been without a political home. Common hostility to the H.N.P. drew them and the Afrikaner party together, though the apparently profound differences of principle between them made the association puzzling, if not unintelligible, to outsiders. The most important common denominator was probably the

reverence for the memory of Hertzog. In spite of past differences the H.N.P. and the Afrikaner party agreed to an electoral pact, and did not oppose each other in any constituency.

In sympathy with these two parties on the colour question were two groups whose sphere of operations lay in the English-speaking areas: the now anti-liberal South African party of Colonel Stallard, and the Central group of Miles-Cadman, a seceder from the Labour party. All these forces were opposed by the United party and Labour, which, like the chief opposition parties, had agreed to an electoral pact to avoid three-cornered contests.

The result was surprising to everybody. The H.N.P. won 70 seats and the Afrikaner party 9; the United party 65, and Labour 6. As the three Native representatives would, in general, oppose the Nationalists, the two "national-minded" parties would have a majority of five. Since they would have the privilege of choosing the Speaker and Chairman of Committees, their effective majority would be four in the House and three in Committee. Smuts resigned and Malan formed, with the Afrikaner party, a coalition government.

The new government had not obtained a majority of the popular votes; but the most significant thing about the electoral figures was their distribution. With one or two exceptions, the two nationalist parties had won every seat in the predominantly Afrikaans-speaking areas. The United and Labour parties had won every seat in the English-speaking areas, where the South African party, Central group and independents had been heavily defeated; Colonel Stallard, though a party leader, a former minister, and a candidate in the constituency that had supported him for years on another platform, lost his deposit. Though from a fifth to a quarter of the Afrikaans-speaking electors voted for what had now become the opposition, the division came dangerously near to coinciding with the differences of national origins and sentiments. Various factors had caused the pendulum to swing, but the most important was probably the sense of insecurity which many felt, both as Afrikaners and as white men; the longing to identify the state with the aspirations of the intensely nation-conscious Afrikaners.

The Senate was dissolved; but the elected members of the

new Senate would be chosen not only by the new M.P.s, but by the old provincial councillors, elected on the tide of victory in 1943. Thus, when the appointed Senators were thrown into one scale and those elected by the Natives into the other, the upper house was divided exactly evenly, twenty-two on either side. The President being chosen from the Nationalist side, the government was actually in a minority of one.

This precarious balance in both houses explains much in the attitude and policy of a government which felt that it was called upon to save the Afrikaner nation from collapse, and to impose its distinctive stamp on South Africa as a whole. While many of the steps taken aroused intense fear in the minds of non-Nationalists, there is one which must be particularly mentioned even in a short survey. The government proposed to abolish the special representation of the Natives which had been conferred in 1936.

It will be remembered that that measure, since it involved the repeal of one of the entrenched clauses of the constitution, could be passed only by a two-thirds majority of the two houses sitting together. The new representation was then, in its turn, entrenched. Was this entrenchment legally binding, in view of the Statute of Westminster and the repeal of a part of the Colonial Laws Validity Act? Legal opinion tended to the view that it was not, the South African constitution being flexible; but the opposition claimed that there was a moral, if not a legal, obligation. Government speakers claimed that it could be done by such a majority as their side could muster in a joint sitting—such a sitting being, of course, necessary if the Senate rejected a bill of the lower house.

After the first session was over, a congress of the Afrikaner party was held at Brakpan. There its leader, Havenga, announced his view, which was endorsed by the congress, that a simple majority would not suffice. A rift in the government thus appeared in sight; a serious rift, since the Afrikaner party held the balance of power. Immediately after this announcement came the death of J. H. Hofmeyr, nephew of "Onze Jan" and the most brilliant figure in South African politics. He was the leader of the liberal wing of the United party.

The Union thus entered the New Year of 1949 with the

liberal forces on the opposition side, and the illiberal forces on the government side, both weakened. Speculation on new political alignments was given unlimited scope. Yet in South African affairs it has commonly been found that *plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose*.

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